

Department of Ophthalmology

# Subconjunctival haemorrhage

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you information about subconjunctival haemorrhage. We hope it will answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have at this time. This leaflet is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below contact us using the details on the back of this leaflet

### What is a subconjunctival haemorrhage?

A subconjunctival haemorrhage is a bleed from a small blood vessel underneath the conjunctiva, which is the transparent layer over the white of the eye (the sclera).

### What are the signs and symptoms?

A subconjunctival haemorrhage is the sudden appearance of a bright red patch on the white of the eye. Often it is flat, but sometimes it can be raised from the surface of the eye. Normally this is not painful, but you may feel some ache or discomfort. The haemorrhage will not interfere with your vision or damage your sight. In most cases you will not notice it until you look in the mirror or someone else draws your attention to it.

### What causes a subconjunctival haemorrhage?

Subconjunctival haemorrhages are very common because the blood vessels of the conjunctiva are small and can easily bleed. In most cases there is no specific cause. Some associated causes include:

- straining (carrying or lifting heavy objects)
- coughing
- sneezing
- vomiting

- high blood pressure
- certain medications (warfarin, aspirin or steroids)
- injury to the eye or rubbing the eye
- following eye surgery

## Treatment

The bright red appearance can be worrying. However, in most cases this is a harmless condition and does not require any treatment. There is nothing we can give you or you can do to make it go away more quickly.

Normally the haemorrhage will clear up on its own within two to three weeks.

Lubricating eye drops may relieve any discomfort.

A haemorrhage can be a sign of high blood pressure so, if necessary, this will be checked. If your blood pressure is high, then we will ask you to visit your GP to assess whether you need to start medication for this.

If you have other unexplained bruising on your body or unusual bleeding, then you should inform your GP.

## Who to contact for more information

- Emergency Department at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3245
- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1109/ 1233/ 0137

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request

in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

Ophthalmology  
Published: October 2023  
Review date: October 2026  
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