



Cornea - Macular Keratitis-Conjunctivitis-Ulcers

The Following Information has been Prepared for You:

The cornea is the clear dome on the front of the eye that is primarily responsible for focusing the light for clear vision.

The conjunctiva is the clear membrane that covers the front of the eye, with the exception of the corneal area.

Macular Keratitis & Conjunctivitis is an infection & inflammation of these two areas, caused by viruses, bacteria or fungi.

Common sources of infection include:

Contaminated water sources - swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas, lake or ocean water

Contact lens wear - sharing with others, purchasing without a prescription or from irreputable sources, improper hand washing before handling, poor cleaning & disinfection of lenses & cases, or overwear

Make-up - sharing with others, not closing lids properly, or using very old products

Contagious organisms - exposure by coming into contact with another infected individual, or sharing / touching items they used during infection

Travel outside of the U.S., especially to tropical areas

Mosquitoes, ticks and other vectors

Herpes Simplex or Zoster reactivation by stress, illness, or immune system compromise

Macular keratitis develops when the body sends an immune response to offending foreign organisms. The blood vessels become dilated, causing redness. White blood cells and lymphatic fluid leave the vessels and cause swelling of the surrounding tissue. Excess mucus and tears are secreted in an attempt to surround, isolate and flush the the foreign organisms out of the eye. In a special microscope, clusters of the white blood cells can be seen within the normally clear cornea. Left unchecked, these clusters of white blood cells will cause ulceration of the cornea. Ulcers are very painful and cause permanent scar tissue on the eye. Ulcers can advance to corneal perforation & profound infection on the inside of the eyeball. Internal infection is extremely hard to treat and can require amputation of the eye. The infection can travel thru the optic nerves to the other eye.

Signs and symptoms of macular keratitis often include redness, swelling, watering, mucus, light sensitivity, blurred vision headache and eye pain. While small ulcers are only visible with a microscope, large ulcers may be seen as a whitish spot on the cornea.

Treatment includes moisture drops, cold compresses and oral tylenol, ibuprofen and benadryl.. Typically, prescription eyedrops which contain antibiotics, steroids, anti-inflammatory or anti-viral agents are used. Oral anti-viral agents are are used in cases of repetitive Herpes infections. The eye may be kept in a dilated state with "cycloplegic" eyedrops to minimize the risk of iritis / uveitis, which is inflammation within the chambers of the eyeball. Dark grey / black polaroid sunglasses are recommended. Contact lenses, make-up and eye patches should NOT be worn during treatment. Infected contact lenses, contact lens cases and make-up should be thrown away.

Your eye doctor will monitor your eyes closely to ensure the treatment is working. Recalcitrant cases may require obtaining tissue samples for lab cultures and hospitalization.

It is critical to take your medications exactly as prescribed, follow up with recommended eye evaluations, and report any worsening of vision or symptoms immediately to your eye doctor.

Please Rate the Information You Received

	☐ Very helpful - all questions are answered ☐ Somewhat helpful - I still have questions ☐ Not helpful – none of my questions were answered
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Comments / Questions / Typos:	
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Provider Contact Information

Family Eye Care & Pediatric Vision Center, PLLC

Melissa Holliman, OD

David Holliman, OD

Brandon Holliman, OD

1203 N. Eastman Rd

Kingsport, TN 37664

Phone: (423) 274-3321

Fax: (423) 247-3631

FamilyEyecareKingsport@gmail.com

Website: DrHolliman.com