NHS

Royal Devon University Healthcare
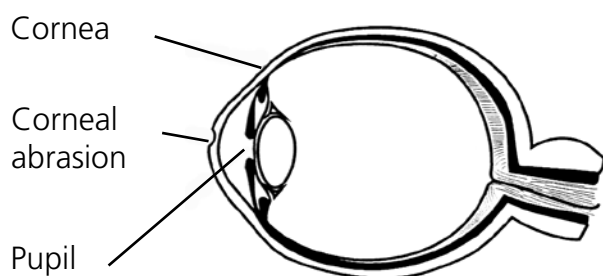**NHS Foundation Trust**

Corneal Abrasions

Cornea

Corneal abrasion

Pupil

What is a corneal abrasion?

It is the loss of part of the outer layer of the cornea.

How is it caused?

Commonly by an object scratching or rubbing the eye, e.g. a finger nail/ something blown into the eye and getting stuck under the top eyelid.

How is it treated?

Many abrasions are small and the use of an antibiotic ointment or drops for 5 days is usually the only treatment required. Where there is a large and/ or deep abrasion, wearing a pad for a day or two and using drops to dilate the pupil may be necessary.

How long will it take to heal?

The cornea repairs itself very quickly and, for most people, it is healed within 12 to 24 hours. Where the damage is large or deep, it can take several days for this to happen. Sometimes, the new skin that forms takes longer to adhere (stick) properly to the deeper layers of the corner (outer eye), and you may be asked to use a preservative free lubricating eye drop and/ or ointment in the months after the injury to help this adhere.

Will my sight be affected?

In most cases there is no long term reduction in your sight, although, for a few days, you may experience some blurring, but this depends on exactly where the injury has occurred or if you are using drops to dilate the pupil.

What else should I know?

- Because a corneal abrasion is often painful, you might find it helpful to take analgesic (painkilling) tablets.

- To reduce the risk of infection, which is increased if you have an injury to your eye, you must wash your hands before putting your drops or ointment in; you should only clean your eye with water that has boiled and cooled using clean cotton wool or a tissue that you use once and then throw away.

- Avoid rubbing your eye for a week or two to allow the new part of the cornea to heal properly.