

Eye Injury

What is an eye injury?

An eye injury usually consists of cuts, scrapes, or bruises on or near the eye. If you have an eye injury, you need to get medical care quickly to check your vision. Getting care right away can prevent loss of sight in some cases. Although first aid is helpful, it is difficult for you to know the extent of damage to the eye. Give first aid then seek medical care.

How is it treated?

Cuts or scrapes

If you have a cut near the eye, first wash your hands. Put a clean cloth over eyeball area to protect it. Then, use a clean cloth to wash the wound vigorously with liquid soap and water for 5 minutes. Rinse the wound well. Put pressure on the cut for 10 minutes with a sterile gauze to stop bleeding. Leave the area exposed to the air. Antiseptic ointments are usually unnecessary.

If you suspect that the eyeball itself has been cut or punctured, do not attempt to clean or wash out the eye. You should tape a paper or styrofoam cup over your eye and go immediately to your health care provider or emergency room. Do not put any pressure on the eye.

Swelling or bruises

Swelling usually follows injury to the tissues or bone around the eye. Apply ice for 20 minutes. Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain if necessary. Don't be surprised if a black eye develops over the next 2 days. A bruise of the white of the eyeball (a subconjunctival hemorrhage) may also occur. These bruises may look bad, but they are harmless. They do not spread to inside the eye and clear up in about 2 weeks.