

# Eye Contusion

Bruising around the eye from an injury to the face or head is called a contusion, or more commonly, a black eye. Blood and other fluids collect in the space around the eye. This causes the area around the eye to swell. Dark bruises can appear in the tissue.

A black eye is usually caused by something hitting the eye or nose. One or both eyes may be blackened, depending on where you get hit. If you get a blow to the nose, both eyes may swell. Facial surgery, such as a facelift or nose surgery, can also cause black eyes.

Symptoms of a black eye may include:

- Pain around the eye
- Swelling around the eye. This can be mild at first, but get worse later. Swelling may make it difficult to open the eye.
- Discoloration or bruise around the eye. The skin around the eye may be red at first. It then grows darker, moving to purple, yellow, green, or black.
- Blurred vision.

Health care providers usually diagnose a black eye by a medical history and exam. You may also need an X-ray, CT scan, or other imaging.

A black eye usually gets better after 1 to 2 days. The bruise on your eyelid may take 1 to 2 weeks to disappear.

## Home care

Follow these tips when caring for yourself at home:

- To reduce swelling and ease pain on the first day, put an ice pack wrapped in a thin towel on the eye. Keep it there for 15 to 20 minutes, once every hour. You can make an ice pack by putting crushed ice in a plastic bag. Wrap the bag in a thin towel. Despite what you see on TV, don't put a raw steak or other raw meat on a black eye.
- You may use acetaminophen to control pain, unless another pain medicine was prescribed. If you have chronic liver or kidney disease, talk with your health care provider before using this medicine.

## Special note on concussions

If you had any symptoms of a concussion today, don't return to sports or other activity that could result in another head injury.

These are symptoms of concussion:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Headache
- Memory loss
- Loss of consciousness

Wait until all symptoms are gone and your health care provider says it's OK before returning to your activity. A second head injury before fully recovering from the first one can lead to serious brain injury.

## **Follow-up care**

If pain or swelling from a black eye doesn't get better after a few days, or if you have vision changes or other problems, follow up with your health care provider. You can also see optometrist or ophthalmologist.

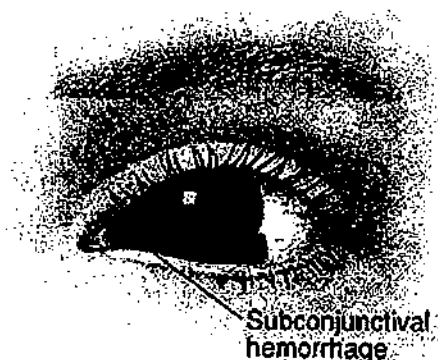
## **When to seek medical advice**

Call your health care provider right away if any of these occur:

- Eye pain gets worse
- Unable to open eyelid after 2 days because of swelling
- Significant vision changes
- Light flashes
- Small dots or strings that seem to be moving across your field of vision (floaters)
- Redness or discharge from your eyelid
- Severe or ongoing headache
- Fainting or loss of consciousness

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# Subconjunctival Hemorrhage



A subconjunctival hemorrhage is when a blood vessel breaks open in the white of the eye. It causes a bright red patch in the white of the eye. It is similar to a bruise on the skin. This type of hemorrhage is common. It can look quite alarming, but it is usually harmless.

## Understanding the conjunctiva

The conjunctiva is the thin layer that covers the inside of the eyelids and the surface of the eye. It has many tiny blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to the eye. The sclera is the white part of the eye that lies beneath the conjunctiva. Sometimes a blood vessel in the conjunctiva breaks open and bleeds. The blood then collects under the conjunctiva and turns part of the eye red. Over several weeks, your body then absorbs the blood.

## What causes subconjunctival hemorrhage?

In many cases the cause isn't known. But some health conditions may make it more likely. These include:

- Eye injury
- Eye surgery
- High blood pressure
- Inflammation of the conjunctiva
- Contact lens use
- Diabetes
- Arteriosclerosis
- Tumor of the conjunctiva
- Diseases that affect blood clotting
- Violent sneezing, coughing, or vomiting
- Certain medicines that can increase bleeding, such as aspirin
- Pushing hard during childbirth
- Straining during constipation

## Symptoms of subconjunctival hemorrhage

The main symptom is a red patch on the eye. You may notice it after waking up in the morning. In most cases just one eye will have a hemorrhage. It usually happens once and then goes away. But some health conditions may cause repeat hemorrhages. You may feel like you have something in your eye, but this is not common. The hemorrhage shouldn't affect your eyesight or cause any pain. If you do have pain, you may have another type of problem with your eye.

## **Diagnosing subconjunctival hemorrhage**

Your healthcare provider will ask about your health history. You may have a physical exam. This includes a basic eye exam. Your provider will make sure you don't have other causes of red eye that may need other treatment.

You will need to see an eye doctor (ophthalmologist) if you have had an eye injury. This doctor might use a special lighted microscope to look closely at your eye. This helps show the doctor if the injury hurt the eye itself and not just its outer layer.

If this is not your first subconjunctival hemorrhage, your doctor may need to find the cause. For example, you may need blood tests to check for a blood clotting disorder.

## **Treatment for subconjunctival hemorrhage**

In most cases you will not need treatment. The red patch will usually go away on its own in a few weeks. It will turn from red to brown and then yellow. There are no treatments to speed up this process. Your doctor may suggest you use a warm compress and artificial tears eye drops to help relieve some of the redness.

If your subconjunctival hemorrhage was caused by a health condition, that condition will be treated. For example, you may need a blood pressure medicine to treat high blood pressure.

## **When to call your healthcare provider**

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Hemorrhage that doesn't go away in 2 to 3 weeks
- Eye pain
- Loss of eyesight
- Another subconjunctival hemorrhage

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