FIRST AID || Eye Injuries

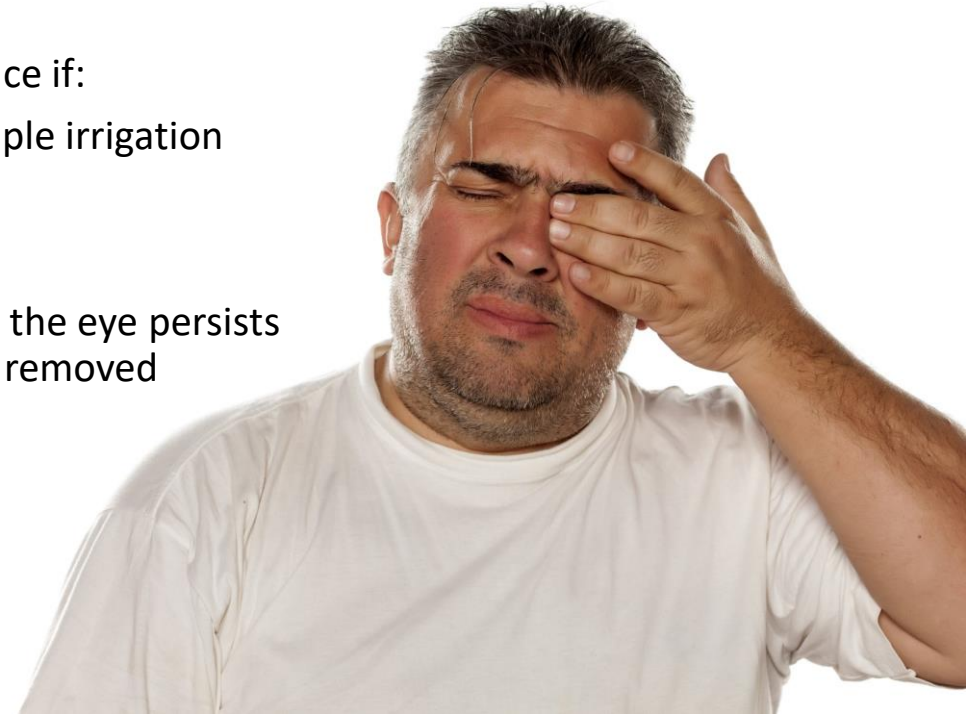
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This safety topic provides basic safety tips if someone has experienced an **eye injury**.

- First aid should be administered only by trained and authorized personnel who are able to provide a primary assessment and basic medical aid using accessible supplies.
- Before bringing your hands to your face, or assisting someone else with first aid, always wash hands with soap and water.

For any eye injury, seek immediate medical assistance if:

- debris in the eye cannot be removed with simple irrigation
- a foreign object is embedded in the eye
- there is abnormal vision at any time
- pain, redness, or the sensation of an object in the eye persists more than 24 hours after matter is flushed or removed
- chemicals have splashed into the eye
- the eye has a corneal abrasion



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Remember, after providing any type of first aid:

- Wash your hands immediately.
- Properly dispose of all hazardous waste.
- Clean and decontaminate all surfaces after exposure to blood or bodily fluids.

The information provided in this safety topic is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice or formal first aid training.

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A **foreign object in the eye** can become dangerous and it's important not to make the situation worse before the item can be removed. Do **not** rub the eye or attempt to remove an object that's embedded in the eye.

- If it feels like there is something in the eye, gently flushing the eye may be the best course of action.
- Sometimes an object can scratch your eye. This often feels as though the object is still in the eye even after it has been removed. This sensation can sometimes take 24 hours to go away.



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To help someone who thinks they have a foreign object in their eye:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Seat the person in a well-lighted area.
3. Gently examine the eye to find the object. Pull the lower lid down and ask the person to look up. Then hold the upper lid while the person looks down.
4. If there is a small object on the surface of the eye that is not embedded, you can assist with a gentle eye flush or have them flush their eye with clean, warm water.

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A **corneal abrasion** is a superficial scratch on the clear, protective "window" at the front of your eye, which is your cornea.

- Your cornea can be scratched by contact with dust, dirt, sand, wood shavings, metal particles, contact lenses, or even the edge of a piece of paper.
- Corneal abrasions caused by plant matter, like a pine needle, usually require special attention because they can cause a delayed inflammation inside the eye.

Signs and symptoms of corneal abrasion include:

- Pain
- A gritty feeling in the eye
- Tearing
- Redness
- Sensitivity to the light
- Headache



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If you suspect that you have a corneal abrasion, seek prompt medical attention. Left untreated, an abrasion on the eye can become infected and result in a corneal ulcer.

- After something hits or rubs your eye that may have caused a corneal abrasion, gently flush the eye which may help wash out foreign particles.
- Most corneal abrasions heal quickly in a few days.

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If there has been a **chemical splash** into the eye, take these steps immediately.



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1. Flush the eye with clean, lukewarm tap water.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water and thoroughly rinse them to make sure no chemicals or soap is left on them.
3. Remove contact lenses. If they didn't come out during the flush, then take them out.
4. Seek emergency care by an eye specialist, like an ophthalmologist, or other medical provider. Take the chemical container, or the name of the chemical, along to the medical facility, as this may aid in the treatment.
5. If available, wear sunglasses while awaiting medical care as they may help reduce sensitivity to light.



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Avoid making an eye injury worse!

- Do not rub your eye after any kind of eye injury. This can cause further damage, especially if there is still foreign matter, or chemical residue, on or near the eye.
- Do not put anything except clean water or contact lens saline rinse in the eye.
- Do not use any kind of eye drops unless directed to do so by a medical professional.
- Do not touch your eyeball with cotton swabs, tweezers, or other instruments.
- Do not attempt to remove an object that is embedded in the eye.
- Do not wear contact lenses while your eye is healing from an injury.

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For a minor eye injury, immediate steps you can take include:

- Blink several times as this may help move small particles out of the eye.
- Pull the upper eyelid gently over the lower eyelid in an attempt to get your eye to produce tears, which can help wash out any small particles. There is also a chance your lower eye lashes can brush way debris from under your upper eyelid.

If an eye flush is recommended based on the type of injury, there are several ways to direct a gentle stream of water on the eye, depending on what resources are available.

- Utilize a workplace eye wash or safety shower station.
- Use a sterile eyewash bottle from the first aid station or first aid kit.
- With a small, clean drinking glass positioned with its rim resting on the bone at the base of the eye socket, pour clean, warm water from the glass into the eye to flush out a foreign object or rinse the eye.
- Get into a shower and aim a gentle stream of lukewarm water onto your forehead, over the affected eye, while holding your eyelid open.
- A clean medicine dropper filled with clean, warm water can be used to irrigate the eye.

If you're wearing contact lenses, it's best to remove the lens before or while you're irrigating the surface of the eye with water in case there is debris stuck to the undersurface of the lens.

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