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Corneal Abrasion and Corneal Erosion

The cornea is the clear front window of the eye. It covers the colored portion of the eye much like a watch crystal covers the face of a watch. The outermost layer of the cornea is called the epithelium.

A **corneal abrasion** refers to a scratch or injury of the corneal epithelium. These painful abrasions occur commonly from dry eyes, fingernail scratches, tree limbs, or vigorous rubbing of the eye.

If bacteria get into the tissues under the protective corneal epithelium, infection or a corneal ulcer can occur.

The most common form of treatment is to apply a contact lens to the eye. The contact will act as a bandage and protect the eye from blinking and rubbing. Anesthetic drops can relieve pain and facilitate examination but may keep the eye from healing properly if used repeatedly. An antibiotic may be prescribed to prevent infection or Artificial tears to keep the eye moist. Keeping the eye well lubricated can aid in a fast recovery.

Occasionally, long after an abrasion has healed, it recurs spontaneously, often upon awakening in the morning. Recurrent **corneal erosions** sometimes need what is called a corneal tattoo to keep the top layer of skin from eroding again.

The eye is the fastest healing tissue in the body. It is important to try not to rub your eye while it is healing. The new epithelium cells are fragile and can easily be rubbed off. When this occurs, the pain will return and it is necessary to see your ophthalmologist. In majority of cases, erosions and abrasions will heal completely. Proper care by Dr. Currier is necessary to help prevent serious consequences.

