



Eye foreign bodies

PATIENT FACT SHEET

HEAL SPECIALIST URGENT CARE

What is a Foreign body?

- Something that is in your eye, which could be dust, plant material, metal shavings, glass, small bugs or wood chips.
- Foreign bodies can be mobile and move around the eye surface or even stick underneath the eyelid.
- Foreign bodies in the eyes can occur to anybody just about. Others are at increased risk due to workplace environments, like cutting or grinding on building sites or factories.

How do I know if I have a foreign body

- The most common symptom you will feel is increased blinking and the need to rub your eye.
- Try an avoid rubbing your eye.
- Sometimes your tears will wash the foreign body to the corner of your eye, which will no longer be a problem.
- If you sustained a scratch on the surface of the eye, you will still have the sensation of a foreign body.
- You may feel pain in the hours proceeding the initial injury. Pain on blinking and redness with increased tear production is other signs of a foreign body.

When should I see a health practitioner ?

- Foreign bodies or scratches on the surface of the eye can be problematic and lead to scarring and infection of the eye if not treated.
- Most eye injuries will heal without complications and can be treated with drops and lubricants.
- If the foreign body is metal and isn't removed, rust can occur after being exposed to tears. If not removed correctly, rust staining can occur.

What do I need to treat my eye?

- Typically a health practitioner will test your vision and may administer some anaesthetic drops in your eye. A small sting is felt and lasts for a few seconds.

- Your eye can be thoroughly examined under a microscope and foreign bodies can be removed, or scratches detected.
- Antibiotic drops and lubricants can be applied as directed, typically 4 times a day and continue 24 hours after symptoms resolve or at least 3 days.
- Don't wear contact lenses until you have been given clearance to do so.

If you have any questions, please ask the doctors or nurses before you leave.

Seeking Help: In a medical emergency go to your nearest emergency department or call 000

Disclaimer: This health information is for general education purposes only. Always consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for you.