

Common Corneal Diseases and Disorders: Symptoms and Treatments.

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Introduction

The cornea, the eye's transparent front layer, plays a crucial role in vision by focusing light and protecting the eye from environmental hazards. However, various diseases and disorders can affect the cornea, leading to significant visual impairment if left untreated. This article explores some of the most common corneal diseases and disorders, their symptoms, and available treatments [1].

Keratitis is inflammation of the cornea, often caused by infections (bacterial, viral, fungal, or parasitic), injury, or prolonged contact lens wear. Antibiotic eye drops or ointments. Antiviral medications. Antifungal eye drops or oral medications. Antiparasitic drugs. Steroid eye drops to reduce inflammation. Distorted or blurred vision. Increased sensitivity to light and glare. Frequent changes in eyeglass prescription [2].

Keratoconus is a progressive thinning and bulging of the cornea into a cone-like shape, often due to genetic factors or environmental influences. Eyeglasses or soft contact lenses. Rigid gas permeable contact lenses, scleral lenses, or custom soft lenses. Corneal cross-linking (to strengthen corneal tissue), Intacs (corneal implants), or corneal transplantation. Vision loss or blurriness, Light sensitivity, Eye pain (due to recurrent corneal erosions), Corneal clouding or opacities [3].

Affects the inner layer (endothelium), causing fluid buildup and swelling. Treatment includes hypertonic saline drops, hairdryer treatments to reduce swelling, and in advanced cases, endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK or DSAEK). Characterized by amyloid deposits in the stroma. Treatments include lubricating eye drops for mild cases and corneal transplantation for severe cases. Affects the epithelium, causing irregularities that affect vision. Treatment options include lubricating eye drops, bandage contact lenses, and in severe cases, phototherapeutic keratectomy (PTK) [4,5].

Corneal ulcers are open sores on the cornea, usually resulting from infections, dry eyes, severe allergies, or trauma. Antimicrobial eye drops (antibiotics, antivirals, or antifungals), depending on the cause. Steroid eye drops to reduce inflammation, lubricating drops, or gels to promote healing. Hospitalization and intensive treatment, potentially

including surgical intervention like corneal transplantation. Progressive vision loss [6].

Corneal ectasia is a condition where the cornea becomes thin and begins to bulge outward, often occurring after refractive surgery like LASIK. Corneal cross-linking to stabilize the cornea, specialized contact lenses, and in advanced cases, corneal transplantation. Herpes simplex keratitis is an infection of the cornea caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV) [7].

Oral or topical antiviral drugs like acyclovir or ganciclovir. To reduce inflammation in conjunction with antiviral therapy. Long-term antiviral therapy to prevent recurrences and potential surgical intervention if scarring occurs. A visible growth on the cornea (usually triangular in shape). Blurred vision if the growth encroaches on the visual axis. Pterygium, often referred to as "surfer's eye," is a benign growth of the conjunctiva that extends onto the cornea, commonly associated with UV exposure, wind, and dust [8].

Lubricating eye drops and anti-inflammatory medications. Surgical removal if the pterygium affects vision or causes significant discomfort. Corneal edema is swelling of the cornea due to fluid accumulation, often resulting from endothelial dysfunction, trauma, or surgery. To draw fluid out of the cornea. To help evaporate excess moisture from the cornea. Endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK or DSAEK) to replace the dysfunctional endothelium [9,10].

Conclusion

The cornea is essential for vision and eye protection, but various diseases and disorders can compromise its function. Understanding the symptoms and treatment options for common corneal conditions is crucial for maintaining eye health and seeking timely medical intervention. Advances in medical and surgical treatments continue to improve the prognosis for patients with corneal diseases, offering hope for better visual outcomes and quality of life.

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