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## Corneal Ulcer

A corneal ulcer is a wound on the surface of the eye. The damage would be similar to a scrape or cut on your skin; both problems result in an unprotected wound. The normal cornea is covered by a layer of tissue called the epithelium, sort of like 'skin' over the deeper eye layers. When the epithelium is damaged, infections can occur which will result in complete perforation of the eye if left untreated. Clinical signs of a corneal ulcer include: squinting, redness, cloudiness, tearing, and lethargy. A special stain called fluorescein is used to identify the ulcer on the cornea.



There are many causes of corneal ulcers including injuries, abnormal eyelashes, lack of tear production, and infections. In some patients, no underlying cause can be found. Corneal ulcers are characterized according to location, depth, associated diseases, and cause.

Treatment of the ulcer depends on the type and depth of ulcer. Some corneal ulcers respond to topical medications used to prevent infection and alleviate pain, whereas very deep corneal ulcers require surgery to prevent or treat a full thickness perforation. Indolent ulcers (chronic erosions) are superficial ulcers that tend to heal very slowly unless special techniques are performed, and occasionally require surgery. Antibiotics are usually dispensed to prevent infections.

You should observe the ulcer daily for comfort level, type of discharge from the eye, and redness. Healing ulcers often exhibit the presence of red blood vessels - this is a GOOD sign! ▪