

Information for Patients

Iritis

What is Iritis?

Iritis is a non-infectious inflammation of the iris (the coloured part of your eye). It often occurs in fit and well young, or middle aged people. However, it can be occasionally associated with general health problems including back pain.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Iritis causes redness on the white of your eye, discomfort when looking at bright lights and some blurring of vision. It usually affects one eye at a time and can recur.

What is the treatment?

The treatment involves the use of eye drops and possibly eye ointment. There are two types of drops used to treat Iritis.

1. Dilating drops are prescribed to enlarge the pupil (the black hole in the middle of the iris). These are very important as they prevent the iris sticking to your lens (which is behind the pupil). They will help to reduce the discomfort, but will make your vision more blurred and more sensitive to bright sunlight. You should not drive whilst your pupil is dilated. The effects of these drops will last until sometime after you stop using them, depending on the type of drops prescribed. You will be given more information about this by a member of staff before you leave the hospital.
2. Steroid drops help to reduce the inflammation in your eye and, depending on the severity of the inflammation, can be prescribed as frequently as half hourly for the first few days. For less severe inflammation, they could be prescribed four to six times a day. You will be advised of this before leaving the department.

If you are not sure how frequently to use your eye drops it is important that you ask the nurse or doctor before leaving the department. If you have been prescribed ointment, this will also be a steroid treatment.

You might be asked to alter the frequency of your eye drops when you attend for follow up appointments. You will be told when to stop your treatment by the doctor. It is not advisable to stop any of your eye drops/ointment until you have been told to do so.

In severe cases you may require an injection under the conjunctiva (clear lining of the eye) known as a sub-conjunctival injection. Placing injections sub-conjunctively increases penetration of the drug into the eye and delivers maximum concentration of the drug.

Are there any complications?

Prompt treatment of Iritis is necessary, as the inflammation can cause problems within the eye these can include:

- Rise in the pressure within your eye.
- Pupil abnormality.
- Reduced vision.
- Cataract.

Will I get Iritis again?

Once the Iritis has settled and your treatment is completed you might never have Iritis again. However, it can recur without warning, months or years after the initial attack. It is important that you attend promptly if you have a recurrence and do not attempt to self-treat.

Should you experience the signs and symptoms of Iritis please attend your local eye unit/Emergency Department.

If your local Emergency Eye Department is at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital you may contact staff on (0161) 276 5597/5599 everyday between 8.00 am and 8.15 pm.



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