

Episcleritis

What is Episcleritis?

Episcleritis is an inflammation of the episclera, the transparent layer that lies between the conjunctiva (clear membrane) and the sclera (the tough white layer of your eye). It is a common condition typically affecting women more frequently than men. It generally occurs in people who are in their 30s and 40s and is a recurrent condition. It may affect one or both of your eyes.

What causes it?

There is usually no apparent cause for it, but it is sometimes associated with other inflammatory conditions for example, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, ankylosing spondylitis (a painful, progressive, rheumatic disease).

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms vary from one person to another, but most people experience some of the following:

- Mild pain
- Localised redness
- The eyeball feeling bruised and tender to the touch
- Increased light sensitivity
- Watering

What is the treatment?

Episcleritis is a self-limiting condition meaning that it will normally resolve untreated within two to three weeks. If you are experiencing discomfort you may be prescribed mild steroid or anti-inflammatory eye drops and anti-inflammatory tablets. Artificial tear drops may also be prescribed to relieve the discomfort.

Are there any complications?

You may suffer with this again. You may develop scleritis which is a deeper inflammation and a more painful condition. The symptoms are the same as Episcleritis although it may be more painful. If you are concerned please contact the departments on the numbers below for advice.

What do I do if I get it again?

If you have a recurrence you should wait to see if it resolves with anti-inflammatory tablets and artificial tears which you can purchase at your own pharmacy. If it does not resolve and is painful you should attend your GP for advice and onward referral if required.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

If you require any further advice or information please contact a member of staff in the Emergency Eye Department on (0161) 276 5597 8.00am – 9.00pm every day.