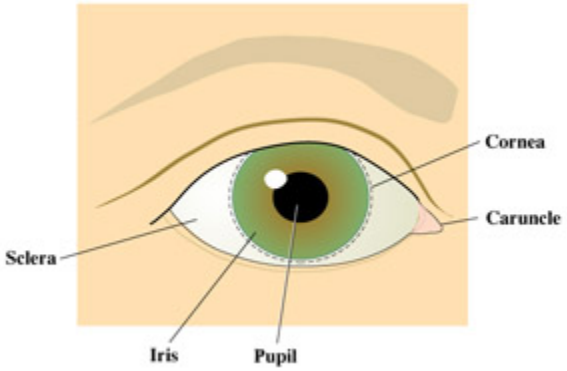
Corneal Transplant

The cornea is the curved clear membrane covering the front of the eye. It is like the window to the eye. It allows us to see images that are then transmitted to the back of the eye (*retina*). These signals are sent to the brain, the brain interprets the signals, and allows us to see. A corneal transplant is a surgical procedure in which a cornea from another eye (donor eye) is used to replace a scarred or defective cornea in the person receiving the transplant. Often, tissue typing is done to make sure there is a good match; however rejection of a cornea is less common than with other organs such as the kidney or pancreas. This is because the cornea has fewer blood vessels and less blood supply than other organs. Rejection means your body is trying to get rid of the new tissue (new cornea) because it recognizes the tissue as something that does not normally belong. Other blood tests are also done prior to the transplant to make sure the cornea to be transplanted is healthy and not carrying a known disease.



PROCEDURE

Once the donor cornea has been removed, it can be preserved in a special solution for several days. The operation consists of removing the central part of the injured cornea. Then a graft of about the same size is cut from the donor cornea and sewn into place with very fine stitches *(sutures*). Your caregiver will give you instructions in caring for your eye following the procedure.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If medications that kill germs *(antibiotics*) or eye drops were prescribed, use as directed and for as long as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- **Keep appointments as directed.** It is necessary to be followed for signs of tissue rejection. If the cornea shows signs of rejection, this can often be treated successfully with anti-inflammatory drops.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing discharge from the eye.
- There is increased pain in the eye.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- There are marked changes in the vision of the affected eye.
- There is a change in vision such as light flashes, light or dark spots (*floaters*), lines or holes or clouding of your vision.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You get a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing
- You develop any reaction or side effects to medicines given.

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