Eye Injury

The eye can be injured by scratches, foreign bodies, contact lenses, very bright light (welding torches), and chemical irritation. The cornea (the clear part of the eye) is very sensitive; even minor injuries to it are painful. Most injuries to the cornea heal in 2-4 days. Treatment may include:

- Antibiotic eye drops or ointment may be needed to soothe the eye and prevent infection. Drops that numb the eye (anesthetic drops) should not be used repeatedly as they can delay healing. Drops to dilate the pupil for 1-2 days are sometimes used to relieve pain.
- Patching the eye can reduce irritation from blinking and bright light. When your eye is patched, you should not drive or operate machinery because your side vision and your ability to judge distances are decreased.
- Rest your eye. Stay in a darkened room and wear sunglasses to reduce the irritation from light.
- Do not rub your eye for the next 2 weeks to allow complete healing.

If you have contact lenses, do not wear them until your caregiver says it is safe to do so. Pain medicine may also be needed for 1-2 days.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increased pain, persistent irritation or blurred vision over the next 2 days.
- Your symptoms are getting worse or not improving.
- You have any other questions or concerns regarding your injury.

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