Corneal Ulcer, From Contact Lenses

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 which are then transmitted to the back of the eye (*retina*). These signals are then sent to the brain. The brain processes the signals and allows us to see. An *ulcer* is like a shallow pit in the window of the eye. An ulcer may be caused by contact lenses that were:

- Not sterilized properly.
- Worn too long.

Follow your caregivers advice on cleaning and wearing of your contacts. Because the cornea has many fewer vessels and less blood supply than other organs, infections are more difficult to treat.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If medicine that kills germs (*antibiotics*) or eye drops were prescribed, take as directed and for as long as directed. Sometimes these drops may be prescribed as often as every few minutes to every hour, for days. It may be necessary to set your alarm clock every few minutes to every hour during the night. This is absolutely necessary. Not following directions for **this problem can cause permanent eye injury, blindness, and chronic severe pain.**
- **Keep appointments as directed.** It is very important for directions to be followed and to use medications as directed, as an ulcer can make a hole *(perforate*) into the inner eye, and this **could cause blindness.**
- **WARNING:** Do not drive or operate machinery and be careful using stairs until you have full use or your injured eye. Your ability to judge distances is impaired.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- If you were given stronger medicine such as narcotics for pain, do not:
  - Drive.
  - Ride a bicycle.
  - Operate machinery
  - Participate in any activity where you could become injured.
- Do not drink alcohol, take tranquilizers or other medications which could impair you while on this type of medicine, unless instructed otherwise by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing discharge from the eye.
- There is increased pain in the eye which is not controlled with medicine.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- There are big *(marked*) changes in the vision of the affected eye.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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