Flashburn of the Cornea
(Ultraviolet Keratitis)

Ultraviolet Keratitis can occur when too much UV light enters the cornea. The cornea is the clear cover on the front part of your eye that helps focus light. It protects your eyes from dust and other foreign bodies and filters ultraviolet rays. This condition can be caused by exposure to snow (*snow blindness*) from the reflected or direct sunlight. It may also be caused by exposure to welding arcs or halogen lamps (*flashburn*) and prolonged exposure to direct sunlight. Brief exposure can result in severe problems several hours later.

CAUSES

Causes of Ultraviolet Keratitis include:

- Exposure to snow (*snow blindness*) from the reflected or direct sunlight.
- Exposure to welding arcs or halogen lamps (*flashburn*).
- Prolonged exposure to direct sunlight.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of Ultraviolet Keratitis usually start 6 to 12 hours after the damage occurred. They may include the following:

- Tearing.
- Light sensitivity.
- Gritty sensation in eyes.
- Swelling of your eyelids.
- Severe pain.

In spite of the pain, this condition will usually improve within 24 hours even without treatment.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply cold packs on your eyes to ease the pain.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Your caregiver may also prescribe an antibiotic ointment to help prevent infection and/or additional medications for pain relief.
- Apply an eye patch to help relieve discomfort and assist in healing. If your caregiver patches your eyes, it is important to leave these patches on.
- Follow the instructions given to you by your caregiver.
- **Do not rub your eyes.**
- If your caregiver has given you a follow-up appointment, it is very important to keep that appointment. Not keeping the appointment could result in a severe eye infection or permanent loss of vision. If there is any problem keeping the appointment, you must call back to this facility for assistance.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Pain is severe and not relieved by medication.
- Pain or problems with vision last more than 48 hours.
- Exposure to light is unavoidable and you need extra protection for your eyes.

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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