**Chemical Eye Burn Treatment**

**Self-Care at Home**

For all chemical injuries, the first thing you should do is immediately irrigate the eye copiously. Ideally, specific eye irrigating solutions should be used for this, but if none are available regular tap water will do just fine.

- Begin washing your eye before taking any other action and continue for at least 10 minutes. The longer a chemical is in your eye, the more damage will occur. Diluting the substance and washing away any particles that may have been in the chemical are extremely important.
- Ideally, in a work setting, you would be placed in an emergency eyewash or shower station and your eye washed with sterile isotonic saline solution. If sterile saline is not available, use cold tap water.
- If you are at home and do not have special eye wash, step into the shower with your clothes on to wash out your eye.
- Even though it may be uncomfortable, open your eyelids as wide as possible as you rinse them out.
- If an alkali or hydrofluoric acid burn has occurred, continue washing until a doctor arrives or you have been taken to a hospital's emergency department.

**Medical Treatment**

Immediate therapy: Doctors likely will continue washing your eye. No standard exists for the amount of washing required. Usually, doctors use at least one liter of fluid.

- Depending on the type of chemical involved, the doctor may test the pH of your eye and continue washing until the pH returns to normal.
- You may receive topical anesthetic eyedrops to numb your eye to make washing less painful.
- Doctors will wipe or irrigate away any solid foreign material in your eye.

Exams and Tests: The doctor determines what chemical caused the burn and completes a thorough eye examination.


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You are given an eye examination using an eye chart to determine how well you can see.

- Structures surrounding the eye are checked.
- Eyelids, in particular, require careful assessment. The doctor turns them inside out to look for foreign material.
- The doctor may stain your eye with a dye called fluorescein to help determine the extent of damage.
- If the burns are minor, you are usually sent home with antibiotic eyedrops and oral pain medications. Occasionally, you may be given dilating eyedrops to help with comfort, and your injured eye may be covered with an eye patch.
- Any significant burn, especially an alkali or hydrofluoric acid burn, may require admission to the hospital.
- For any minor injuries, an ophthalmologist should evaluate you within 24-48 hours of your injury. For any moderate to significant injury, an ophthalmologist should evaluate you before you leave the Emergency Room.
- Your tetanus immunization status may be determined and updated.

For more information, read the complete article, Chemical Eye Burns on eMedicineHealth.com.

WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth
Reviewed by Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD on April 18, 2007
Last updated: April 18, 2007

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