



Superficial keratitis involves the outermost layers of the cornea. When this form of keratitis has healed, there is usually no scar on the cornea.

Deep keratitis affects deeper corneal layers. There can be a scar left after healing, which may or may not affect your vision, depending on where the scar is located.

In addition to fungal keratitis, there are a number of other types of keratitis, including:

- Amoebic keratitis (usually affecting contact lens wearers, it is often caused by *Acanthamoeba*);
- Bacterial keratitis (infection with bacteria);
- Herpes keratitis (caused by *herpes simplex* and *herpes zoster* viruses); and
- Photokeratitis (due to intense ultraviolet radiation exposure, e.g., snow blindness or welder's arc eye).

Causes

Fusaria are common fungi found in soil, in water, and on plants throughout the world, particularly in warmer climates. Fungal keratitis can occur after a corneal injury involving plant material, for example, getting hit in the eye with a palm branch. This eye infection can also occur when people who are immunosuppressed are exposed to the fungus. There is also a risk of developing fungal keratitis with contact lens use.

If you experience any symptoms of fungal keratitis, such as pain, reduced vision, light sensitivity and tearing or discharge from your eye, see an ophthalmologist immediately; treatment must be started right away to prevent possible blindness.

Symptoms

- Reduced vision
- Pain in the eye (often sudden)
- Increased light sensitivity
- Tearing
- Excessive tearing or discharge from your eye

If you experience any of these symptoms, especially if they come on suddenly, call your ophthalmologist right away. If not taken care of, keratitis can lead to blindness. Fungal keratitis treatment must be started right away to prevent vision loss.

Treatment

To accurately diagnose fungal keratitis, your Eye M.D. may gently scrape the eye to take a small sample of material and test it for infection. Your ophthalmologist will diagnose whether your keratitis is fungal keratitis or bacterial keratitis.

Treatment of fungal keratitis usually includes antifungal eye drops and oral medications. If medical treatment is not effective in clearing the infection, surgery may be required, including corneal transplantation. In some cases, even corneal surgery will not restore vision, and permanent vision impairment or blindness may occur. That is why it is so important to see your Eye M.D. at the first sign of any ocular infection.

If you wear contact lenses, it is very important to safely handle, store and clean your lenses to reduce your risk of developing keratitis.