

IRITIS

This is an inflammatory condition that affects the iris (the coloured part of the eye). Iritis may be linked with other inflammatory conditions of the body, for example arthritis, but in most cases the cause remains unknown. It is a condition that tends to recur, and although only one eye is usually affected at any one time, it is important to realise that iritis can affect either eye.

Signs and symptoms

An aching, painful, red eye with a small pupil, some blurring of vision and sensitivity to light.

Treatment

It is important that this condition is treated at a specialist eye department, as it can be difficult to diagnose without certain equipment (which is not likely to be available at your GP surgery).

The eye specialist will prescribe anti-inflammatory drops, which may be used frequently at first, then gradually reduced, on the doctor's instructions. You must not suddenly stop using the drops, or the iritis may recur. You may also need to use an anti-inflammatory ointment last thing at night. You will be given drops to dilate (enlarge) your pupil.

This will cause blurring of vision and difficulty in focusing, and may also increase your sensitivity to light. It is, however, a vital part of the treatment for iritis. If the pupil is not dilated the inflamed iris will stick to the lens of your eye, which can lead to complications.

Should you have a further attack of iritis, it is essential, if complications are to be avoided, that you seek early treatment at a hospital eye department. The sooner treatment for iritis is started, the easier it is to treat, and the quicker the inflammation subsides.

If your eye needs bathing, clean it gently using boiled, cooled water and clean cotton wool.

If you have any queries or problems with your eye after you get home, please contact the nurse in the Ophthalmology Outpatients Department by telephoning 01302 366666, ext. 3672.

This information is available in other languages and formats, on request.

Please contact the Patient Advice & Liaison Service on 01302 553140 or 0800 028 8059.