

Anterior Uveitis

Information for patients



Oxford Eye Hospital

What is anterior uveitis?

This is an inflammatory condition affecting the iris, (the coloured part of your eye). It can be associated with other inflammatory conditions of the body, for example arthritis, but in most cases the cause is unknown.

It is a common condition which tends to recur (come back). Although it usually only affects one eye at any one time, it is important to know that iritis can affect either eye.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- aching, painful red eye
- small pupil
- blurred vision
- sensitivity to light (not being comfortable in normal room light)

What is the treatment?

It is important that this condition is treated at an **ophthalmic casualty department** (eye emergency department). It can be difficult to diagnose without special equipment which is not available at your GP surgery or pharmacy.

If left untreated the eye would become increasingly more painful and vision may be permanently affected if complications (including glaucoma, induced cataract and swelling of the retina) develop.

The eye doctor will prescribe anti-inflammatory drops. These may be used frequently at first, and then gradually less frequently – according to the doctor's instructions. You must not suddenly stop using the drops, or the problem may recur. You may also need to use an anti-inflammatory ointment at night.

You will be given drops to dilate your pupil (enlarge it). This will cause blurred vision and difficulty in focusing (particularly for reading), and may also increase your sensitivity to light. This is a vital part of the treatment for anterior uveitis. If the pupil is not dilated, the inflamed iris will stick to the lens, which can lead to complications.

You may require intensive pupil dilating drops in the eye emergency department to make sure your pupil is dilated before you go home.

How long does it take to clear up with the treatment?

The condition can take from a few days to weeks to clear up, depending on the severity of the condition. The earlier treatment is started, the less time the problem will take to clear up.

Signs to look out for

If you have a future attack of anterior uveitis, it is essential that you seek **early treatment** at an **eye emergency department** to prevent complications from developing.

The sooner treatment is started, the easier anterior uveitis is to treat, and the quicker the inflammation will settle.

How to contact us

If you notice the symptoms of anterior uveitis (aching, painful red eye, small pupil, blurred vision, sensitivity to light) please contact the eye emergency triage line at the **Oxford Eye Hospital** on **(01865) 234567** and select **option 1** for eye emergencies. You will be able to speak to a trained eye specialist who will advise you on what to do next.

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 08:30am to 4:30pm

Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays 08:30am to 3:30pm

Out of hours, please call NHS 111

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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