

SUBCONJUNCTIVAL HAEMORRHAGE

You have been diagnosed as having a sub-conjunctival haemorrhage, sometimes called a burst blood vessel.

What is it?

The front, white part of the eye, known as the sclera, is covered by a transparent membrane called the conjunctiva. The conjunctiva has a rich blood supply. A sub-conjunctival haemorrhage occurs when tiny blood vessels leak, causing a small amount of blood to gather between these two layers. Because the conjunctiva is transparent this bleed is very obvious and looks very serious, but it is not. It will not interfere with your sight. (This is the same process which causes bruising, which is a small bleed between the layers of the skin).

Signs and Symptoms

The haemorrhage usually appears suddenly as a red patch or spot on the white of the eye and may be flat or occasionally raised above the surface of the eye. It is usually painless and does not affect your eyesight, but it can sometimes cause an ache or discomfort or feeling of tightness in your eye. You might not have been aware your eye was red until someone pointed it out to you.

The causes of subconjunctival haemorrhage

Practically all sub-conjunctival haemorrhages occur for no apparent reason and are very common because the blood vessels in the conjunctiva are very fragile and can easily bleed a little. **It does not mean you have an illness or an eye condition.** In most cases there is no specific cause but the following are associated with the condition:

- Strenuous activities e.g. carrying or lifting heavy items
- Coughing or sneezing
- Vomiting
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Blood thinning medication e.g. Warfarin, Aspirin
- Trauma

Treatment

A sub-conjunctival haemorrhage does not require treatment and patients only need to be seen in the Eye Clinic if it has been caused by trauma. A blood pressure or blood sugar test can be undertaken via your GP if considered necessary. The red appearance should disappear in 7-10days and sometimes looks a little yellow before it goes.