

# CHEMICAL EYE INJURIES

**Act immediately - every second counts**

**Get others to bring things to help you**

**Treat before referring and transporting**

## Immediate action

- Stop whatever you are doing
- Call other staff to help
- Lie patient down
- Open the eye
- Squirt in lots of anaesthetic (xylocaine ampoule or anaesthetic eye drops)
- Irrigate the eye thoroughly with water
- Use tap water, water for irrigation or saline
- Pour irrigating fluid from jug, bottle or giving set
- Get patient to open both eyes and look straight ahead or down
- Pull back the eyelids. Irrigate under eyelids with a syringe or giving set
- If ringing for advice use a portable phone and keep irrigating

## Ongoing treatment

- Continue irrigation for **30 minutes** before transporting
- Repeat anaesthetic drops **every 5 minutes**
- Instil cyclopentolate drops **every 5 minutes** if available
- Continue irrigation while transporting
- All chemical injuries require immediate ophthalmic review

## Overcoming problems

- **Pain** Keep using anaesthetic and cyclopentolate drops. Give three paracetamol tablets (1500mg) and consider IV or IM pain relief
- **Panic** Call for help. Be very firm with uncooperative adults
- **Eyelid closure** Use towels, cotton buds, a bent paper clip, lid speculum or Desmarres retractor to keep eye open
- **Eye movements** Get patient to fixate on an object or their own outstretched hand
- **Infants** Ask parents to leave. Swaddle and ignore crying
- **Watery mess** Ignore, you are saving a person's sight!

**IRRIGATE**

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