

DESCRIPTION

Sudden appearance of blood in the white area of the eye. Although the bleeding may seem alarming, it is not serious. The bleeding is from the thin, clear membrane (conjunctiva) that covers the white of the eye (the sclera). Often, a person discovers the problem after waking up in the morning.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- A small, usually painless spot of bright red blood in the white of the eye. It may first appear as a patch, but may spread to cover the entire white area of the eye.
- Swelling may occur in that part of the eye.
- There are no vision problems.

CAUSES

When one of the tiny, unseen blood vessels in the conjunctiva breaks, it can bleed and cause the problem. There is often no obvious reason why the vessel breaks. It may follow coughing, sneezing or vomiting, heavy lifting, diving under water, or rubbing of the eyes.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Certain disorders such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or blood thinner drugs can be risk factors.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The blood will go away by itself. It should be absorbed in 1 to 3 weeks. The blood may change color from red to yellow before disappearing.

GENERAL MEASURES

- Cool compresses may be applied at first. After 24 hours, you may use warm compresses applied to the eye to help hasten the removal of the blood.

MEDICATIONS

- Over the counter artificial tears may help if there is any irritation.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF

- You experience increased pain, vision changes, or new or unexplained symptoms develop.
- Your subconjunctival hemorrhage does not improve within 3 weeks, or it recurs often.