Hyphaema

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.

What is a hyphaema?

A hyphaema is the medical term for a bleed inside the eye. The bleed happens in the front of the eye in the clear fluid called the aqueous humour.

What are the symptoms?

- Blurred vision: depending on how bad the bleed is your vision may be affected. Your vision will often be worse in the mornings after lying down overnight then settle as you sit or stand upright as the blood settles to the bottom of the eye. As the bleed is cleared your vision will get better.

- You may be able to see the blood in your eye. The blood usually settles to form a line of blood in front of your iris (the coloured part of the eye).

- History of trauma to the eye

What causes a hyphaema?

Bleeding in the front of the eye usually happens because of a forceful injury to the eye or “blunt trauma”. The blood vessels on the iris are injured causing bleeding. The bleed may be small or may be severe, where the

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whole of the front of the eye fills with blood. Depending on the extent of the bleed, the pressure in the front of the eye may increase. Rarely, eye surgery may cause a hyphaema.

What is the treatment?

Eye drops

- Anti-inflammatory eye drops are given to help the eye settle
- Drops to dilate your pupil are usually given. These may blur your vision even more and cause sensitivity to light. These side effects will disappear once you stop using these drops.
- If the pressure inside the eye is raised, you will be given drops or, in rare cases, tablets to help treat this.
- You may also be given antibiotic eye drops if the surface of the eye has been damaged by the injury.

Rest

This is very important. Please rest by sitting upright in a chair or by supporting yourself with several pillows in bed. If possible, sleep propped up at 45 degrees. This will help the blood to clear more quickly. It is important to avoid sports, any bending, lifting, housework or physical exertion. The blood will gradually be reabsorbed but this will take longer if you move around a lot. There is also a possibility of having a re-bleed which can be much worse then the original bleed and cause more problems for your eye and vision.

Do not go back to work or school until instructed by your doctor

What happens now?

You will need close follow up until the blood has cleared from the eye. After this you will have a further appointment 3 to 4 weeks later to check there has been no lasting damage to your eye. It is unusual to be left with long-term damage, but this is possible if the injury was very severe.

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When to seek advice

If you suffer a re-bleed your vision will suddenly become blurred and the eye might become painful. Contact the eye clinic if this occurs.

How do I contact the hospital?

If you require advice please telephone the Ophthalmic Outpatient Department between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 01423 542217.

Further Information

Other sources of useful information can be found at:
NHS www.nhs.co.uk
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust website www.hdft.nhs.uk
National Eye Institute http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/

Feedback

If you have a concern, complaint or compliment, or would like to provide feedback regarding your experience of the Ophthalmology Service / clinic, please contact the Patient Experience Team via the following:
Patient Experience helpline 01423 555499 (Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4pm)
E-mail: hdft.patientexperience@nhs.net

Department of
Ophthalmology
Harrogate District Hospital
Lancaster Park Road
Harrogate HG2 7SX
01423 885959
Direct line: 01423 553195
www.hdft.nhs.uk