

CORNEA TRANSPLANTATION



What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear front window of the eye that covers the colored iris and the round pupil. Light is focused while passing through the cornea so that we can see.

How can an unhealthy cornea affect vision?

If the cornea is injured, it may become swollen or scarred, and its smoothness and clarity may be lost. Scars, swelling, or an irregular shape can cause the cornea to scatter or distort light, resulting in glare or blurred vision.

What conditions may cause the need for a corneal transplant?

- Corneal failure after other eye surgery, such as cataract surgery
- Keratoconus, a steep curving of the cornea
- Hereditary corneal failure, such as Fuchs dystrophy;
- Scarring after infections or injury
- Rejection after the first corneal transplant

What happens if you decide to have a corneal transplant?

BEFORE SURGERY

Once you and your cornea specialist decide you need a corneal transplant, your name is put on the list at the local eye bank. Usually the wait for a donor cornea is not very long. Before a cornea is released for transplant, the eye bank tests the human donor for the viruses that cause hepatitis and AIDS. The cornea is carefully checked

The day of surgery

Surgery is often done on an outpatient basis. You may be asked to skip breakfast, depending on the time of your surgery. Once you arrive for surgery, you will be given eye drops and perhaps a sedative to help you relax. Either local or general anaesthesia is used, depending on your age, medical condition, and eye disease. You will not see the surgery while it is happening.

The operation

The eyelids are gently opened. The diseased or injured cornea is carefully removed from the eye. Any necessary additional work within the eye, such as removal of a cataract, is completed. Then the clear donor cornea is sewn into place. When the operation is over, your doctor will usually place a shield over your eye.

After surgery

You may go home after a short stay in the recovery area. An examination at the doctor's office will be scheduled for the following day. You will need to:

- Use the eye drops as prescribed;
- Be careful not to rub or press on your eye;
- Continue normal daily activities but avoid strenuous exercise or activities
- Wear eye glasses or an eye shield for protection, as advised by your doctor

Your ophthalmologist will decide when to remove the stitches, depending upon the health of your eye and rate of healing. Usually, it will be one year before stitches are removed.



What complications can occur

Corneal transplants are rejected 5% to 30% of the time. The rejected cornea clouds and vision deteriorates. Most rejections, if treated promptly, can be stopped with minimal injury. Warning signs of rejection are:

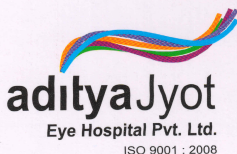
- LIGHT SENSITIVITY • DECREASE IN VISION • REDNESS

Other possible complications include:

- ? Infection
- ? Bleeding
- ? Swelling or detachment of the retina
- ? Glaucoma.

All of these complications can be treated. A corneal transplant can be repeated, usually with good results, but the overall rejection rates for repeated transplants are higher than for the first transplant. Irregular curvature of the transplanted cornea (astigmatism) may slow the return of vision but can also be treated.

Vision may continue to improve up to a year after surgery. A successful corneal transplant requires care and attention on the part of both patient and physician. However, no other surgery has so much to offer when the unhealthy cornea is deeply scarred or swollen. Corneal transplant surgery would not be possible without the thousands of generous donors and their families who have donated their eyes so that others may see.



For further details, please contact our reception desk

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