

FAST FACTS: Eye Pain

Eye pain and visual impairments can be associated with serious health issues for older adults, including limitations in physical activity, impaired mobility, and poor balance, which can lead to falls, fractures, etc. Assessment of common eye conditions in older adults is crucial to assist in having positive outcomes. Many eye disorders share common symptoms such as some degree of eye pain or discomfort and eye redness.

✓ Normal Changes of the Aging Eye

- Tear production decreases which may cause dry eyes
- A gray-white ring can form around the “colored” part of the eye; there is no significance to this (see photo on right)
- Sensitivity of the eye decreases which may lead to corneal damage
- “Floaters” are common
- Pupil size decreases and reactivity to light and dark is slower



✓ Assessment

- Recognition is critical. All eye complaints deserve immediate assessment to preserve vision and avoid complications
- What to report to Healthcare provider:
 - Information about the reported pain such as: when it started, location, how long, severity, foreign body sensation, etc.
 - Possible pain causes such as: foreign object in eye, trauma, allergies, etc.
 - Other symptoms such as: fever, visual complaints (seeing items in field of vision, field of vision decreasing, etc.), headache, nausea, not eating, fatigue, dizziness, cough, change in cognitive status, etc.

✓ Possible Intervention

- Will depend on the results of assessment
- Non-Drug Treatments include maintaining a calm environment (i.e. calming music, etc.), reassuring the patient, and providing support as needed to maintain safety

✓ What Caregivers can do to help their loved one with Eye Pain

- Contact health care provider immediately for assessment of condition
- Write down and share information about your loved one's pain with their provider
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to the Healthcare provider
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment to decrease minor pain