

Subconjunctival Hemorrhage

Subconjunctival hemorrhages are bright red patches or spots on the white of the eye (**sclera**) that result from the rupture and bleeding of a small capillary near the surface.

The redness is usually harmless and painless. You may not know your eyes are red until someone tells you or you look in a mirror.

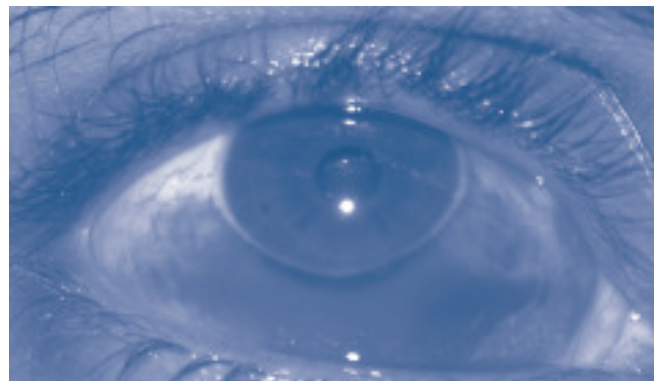
CAUSES OF SUBCONJUNCTIVAL HEMORRHAGES

The **conjunctiva** is the thin sheet of transparent tissue that covers the sclera (the white part of your eye). It contains many blood vessels that are usually too small to see. Your eyeball looks white. However, blood vessels in the conjunctiva may become inflamed and cause redness. They may also bleed. The blood from a broken blood vessel becomes trapped just under the conjunctiva. A small amount of blood can make the eye look very red. Although the appearance can be alarming, it is almost always harmless and temporary.

Possible causes of these hemorrhages are:

- Injury
- Rubbing your eye
- Coughing or sneezing
- Lifting heavy objects
- Straining

Sometimes subconjunctival hemorrhages occur for no clear reason. They may occur more often in people who have high blood pressure. Certain medications which affect the body's bleeding mechanisms may also contribute to causing subconjunctival hemorrhages.



In this example of subconjunctival hemorrhage, a large red spot covers the white of the eye.

SYMPTOMS OF SUBCONJUNCTIVAL HEMORRHAGE

Your eye has red lines or patches in the normally white sclera, or the whole sclera may become red. Your eye may feel slightly scratchy.

If you have eye pain or changes in your vision, the redness may be caused by a more serious problem.

TREATMENT

Usually, no treatment is required. Use of lubricating eyedrops will be recommended if irritation is present. Over time, the blood spot will clear up on its own, usually within one to three weeks. Rarely, if a patient has recurrent or excessive subconjunctival hemorrhages, the ophthalmologist will perform a medical work-up and order appropriate laboratory studies.

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