

UVEITIS

Uveitis is inflammation inside the eye. It can affect any part of the eye and can range from mild to very serious.



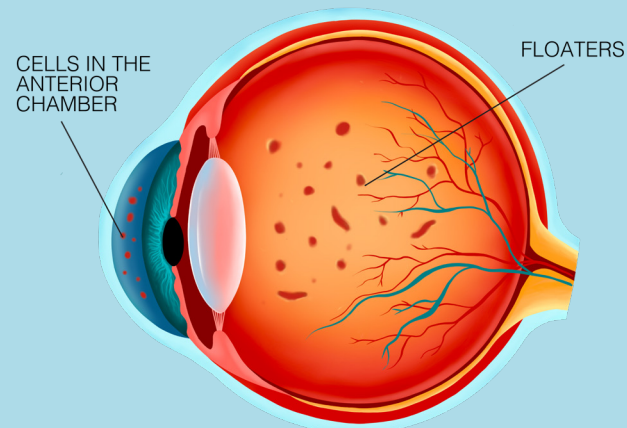
UVEITIS

Uveitis means inflammation inside the eye. It can be caused by infections like viruses, inflammation like sarcoidosis, or occasionally cancers like lymphoma. It can cause mild redness, ache and blur in the eye or can cause serious vision loss. With prompt treatment it can be controlled in most people.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms depend on the type of uveitis present. Usually only one eye is affected, although it is possible for both eyes to be involved.

- Redness of the eye.
- Light sensitivity.
- Eye ache.
- Blurred vision.
- Increased floaters (black or grey dots that are mobile).
- Irregular pupil.



CAUSES AND RISKS

Uveitis is inflammation of the uvea. In many cases the cause of uveitis is unknown, occurring in otherwise healthy individuals.

However, there is a greater risk for people with inflammatory or autoimmune problems, such as:

- Inflammatory bowel disease.
- Inflammatory arthritis, and psoriasis.
- Existing infections can also be a cause of uveitis, whether bacterial, viral, parasitic or fungal.

The most common cause in New Zealand is HLA B27- related uveitis. HLA-B27 is a gene that increases the risk of uveitis developing in those who have it.

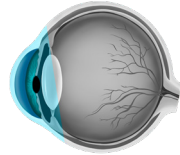
If you are diagnosed with uveitis, your ophthalmologist will need to know your full medical history and current medications, and may request investigations to check for an underlying cause.

TYPES OF UVEITIS

Uveitis can be classified according to cause and location. For example:

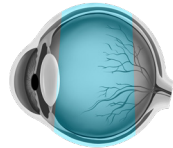
1. ANTERIOR UVEITIS (IRITIS)

Anterior uveitis, or iritis, primarily affects the iris, although the ciliary body may also become inflamed. It is the most common form of uveitis, accounting for about 75% of cases. The most common symptoms are redness, eye ache, sensitivity to lights, and blurred vision. It is the easiest to treat and will typically only last a few days or weeks. Anterior uveitis often recurs, although some patients will only experience it once.



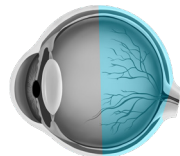
2. INTERMEDIATE UVEITIS

Intermediate uveitis affects the part of the uvea behind the ciliary body. At times, inflammation can extend to the retina. The most common symptoms are blurred vision and floaters.



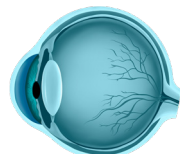
3. POSTERIOR UVEITIS

Posterior uveitis means that there is inflammation at the back of the eye, often affecting the retina or blood vessels. It is often one of the most serious forms of uveitis and may require long term medication to control it. The most common symptoms are reduced vision and floaters.



4. PANUVEITIS

Panuveitis is when the whole eye is inflamed. There is usually significant pain and loss of vision, and prompt treatment is needed to preserve vision.



TREATMENT

The treatment required for uveitis depends on the cause. In many cases, the treatment is aimed at controlling the inflammation and the symptoms, and preserving vision. If treated quickly, then uveitis can usually be managed before it damages the eye.

The range of treatments include:

- Eye drops: most commonly a course of steroid eye drops is used over a number of weeks. Other eye drops may be prescribed as well to help relieve symptoms.
- Injection: a small steroid injection to the outside of the eye.
- Tablets: steroids administered orally.
- Intravenous: a steroid drip into the vein.
- Immunosuppressants: sometimes administered with steroids to treat uveitis cases.

DURATION AND RELAPSES

Uveitis that is limited to the anterior chamber portion of the uvea (iritis) typically lasts for 4-6 weeks, but the duration and severity of the disease is often more protracted for posterior involvement (choroiditis).

Recurrence is a feature of any form of uveitis, so any patient with a history of uveitis who develops a red eye should be reviewed to exclude a recurrence.



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