

Episcleritis

Episcleritis is a condition in which there is inflammation involving the outer coating of the eye. Episcleritis is almost always transient, self-limited and benign. This condition typically occurs in “young adults” (20 to 50 years of age) but can happen at any age. Episcleritis frequently occurs in people who have pingueculae (slightly raised yellowish bumps located on either or both sides of the cornea).

Episcleritis presents as redness involving either all (diffuse) or only a section (sectoral) of the “white part” of a person’s eye. A raised nodule is sometimes present.

Symptoms may consist of:

- A dull, achy sensation
- Tenderness of the eye
- Light sensitivity or
- A foreign body sensation

Usually only one eye is involved at a time. Recurrences may occur.

Most cases episcleritis are idiopathic, meaning there is no identifiable cause. Infections, foreign bodies, trauma and collagen-vascular diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus can cause episcleritis. In addition, episcleritis must be distinguished from more serious conditions such as scleritis, iritis, keratitis and endophthalmitis. It is important to be evaluated by an eye doctor in order to properly diagnose the condition and rule out these other more serious conditions.

Treatment of episcleritis consists of topical steroid eye drops and sometimes oral nonsteroidal medication such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil). Episcleritis usually resolves within one week with proper treatment. Usually a follow up visit is needed to make certain the condition has resolved.