

Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis

Giant papillary conjunctivitis (GPC) is an inflammation of the inner surface of the eyelids, most commonly related to contact lens wear. GPC is seen both in patients who use soft and rigid gas permeable contact lenses. This condition can appear at any time, even after many years of successful wear. In some circumstances, GPC can occur in people who are not contact lens wearers, such as patients who suffer from severe allergies such as vernal conjunctivitis, or in patients with artificial eyes.

GPC will not harm your vision but it is annoying. It is difficult to cure, and can persist despite prolonged treatment. Often, the condition can be controlled so that contact lenses can be worn comfortably, even if it is not completely cured. In some cases, however, GPC becomes a chronic problem which can only be eliminated by discontinuing contact lens wear.

GPC is not an infection, but an inflammation caused by constant blinking across a contact lens or other foreign body. Normally, the undersurface of the upper eyelid is smooth like silk. In patients with GPC, the undersurface of the eyelid is roughened and inflamed, and the entire eye becomes irritated. In addition to this mechanical irritation, contact lenses also trap deposits on their surface, which add to the inflammation. Many patients find that the symptoms are relieved once contact lens wear is discontinued, and that the symptoms return as soon as contact lens wear resumes.



Typical Symptoms of GPC include:

- Irritation
- Redness
- Itching
- Mucus Discharge
- Blurry Vision

Underside of upper eyelid

GPC is Treated with:

- **Rest** from contact lens wear, usually for several weeks or even months;
- **Eye Drops** to control inflammation.

Once GPC is under control, some of the following steps may be helpful:

- Consider a refit into a new brand of contact lenses. Daily Disposable lenses are preferred.
- Change your lens care system. Hydrogen peroxide-based solutions can be effective if used properly.
- Limit contact lens wear
- Build up wearing time slowly

Eye drops are available that can be used for long-term control of inflammation. During an active episode of GPC, you will probably need to see your eye doctor a number of times to monitor and adjust treatment.

Finally, you must assume that GPC is a **chronic condition**. Periodic visits for examination will most likely be needed. You should report any recurrence of symptoms as soon as possible, since delayed treatment makes GPC more difficult to manage.

Ask your eye doctor if you have any questions about GPC or any other problems related to the health or comfort of your eyes. If you find that contact lenses have become a source of recurrent problems other options to improve your vision such as glasses or refractive surgery can be discussed.

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