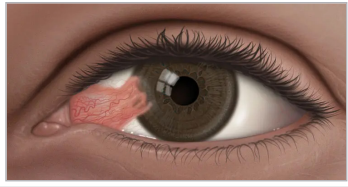


WHAT IS PTERYGIUM?



Pterygium is a growth of fleshy tissue (has blood vessels) that may start as a pinguecula. It can remain small or grow large enough to cover part of the cornea.

When this happens, it can affect your vision.

WHAT CAUSES PTERYGIUM?

Pterygium is believed to be caused by a combination of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun, wind, and dust.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of pterygium can range from mild to severe. They include:

- Redness and swelling of the conjunctiva, mostly while the pterygium grows
- A yellow spot or bump on the white of your eye
- Dry, itchy, burning eyes or feeling like sand or grit is stuck in your eye
- Blurry vision

HOW IS PTERYGIUM DIAGNOSED?

The diagnosis is made by slit-lamp examination of the wing-shaped limbal growth at the characteristic location within the palpebral fissure. The diagnosis is most often clear clinically, but histopathologic confirmation is performed routinely, as there can be associated dysplasia of the overlying tissue.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENTS?

In many cases pterygium does not need to be treated. However, if your eyes are uncomfortable or your vision is affected, you may need treatment.

Your ophthalmologist can treat the discomfort, redness, or swelling from a pterygium with lubricating or steroid eye drops.

If a pterygium grows large enough to cause problems, your ophthalmologist will probably recommend surgery to remove it. Once the pterygium is removed, your surgeon may transplant a thin piece of normal tissue onto the affected area. This technique helps reduce the chance that your pterygium will grow back.

The best way to keep pterygium from coming back is to avoid sunlight, dryness, and dust.