

Plaza Del Rio Eye Clinic, P.C.

Pterygium

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WHAT IS A PTERYGIUM?

Pterygium (pronounced tur-IJ-ee-um) is a growth on the cornea (the clear front window of the eye) and the conjunctiva - the thin, filmy membrane that covers the white part of your eye (sclera). These growths are believed to be caused by dry eye, exposure to wind and dust and UV (ultra-violet) exposure.

WHAT ARE TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES?

In many cases no treatment is needed. Sometimes eyedrops and ointments may be used to reduce inflammation and redness. If the growth threatens sight or causes persistent discomfort, it can be removed. You should understand that despite proper surgical removal, the pterygium may return. If a pterygium returns, additional surgery may be necessary, particularly if there is persistent inflammation or progression of the new growth towards the center of vision.

HOW WILL REMOVING THE PTERYGIUM AFFECT MY VISION?

The goal of pterygium excision (removal) is to decrease irritation/inflammation, achieve a normal, smooth ocular surface, improve the decreased vision caused by the pterygium, and prevent regrowth, if possible.

WHAT IS MITOMYCIN-C?

Mitomycin-C (MMC) may be used during excision (removal) to minimize the recurrence of pterygium. MMC was first used as anti-cancer drug. Ophthalmologists use MMC for other purposes "off-label" as part of the practice of medicine*. The decision to use MMC is based on the evaluation of the advantages and potential disadvantages in each individual case.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF PTERYGIUM EXCISION?

All operations and procedures are risky and can result in unsuccessful results, complications, and injury from both known and unknown causes. Complications that may occur days, weeks, or even months later include but are not limited to: poor vision; loss of corneal clarity; bleeding; infection; double vision and injury to parts of the eye and nearby structures from the procedure or anesthesia. The pterygium may grow back. You may need additional treatment or surgery to treat these complications.

In addition to the usual complications of pterygium excision, Mitomycin-C may cause blurred vision, worsened or loss of vision, ocular pain, ocular surface irritation, sensitivity to light, delayed healing, scleral or corneal melt with perforation, scarring of the conjunctiva or cornea, iritis, glaucoma, cataract, and possible need for further eye surgery.