

# Corneal Neovascularization

This material will help you understand corneal neovascularization, its causes, and how it may be treated.

## What is corneal neovascularization?

Corneal neovascularization (NV) occurs when blood vessels form inside the cornea. The cornea is the clear dome-shaped window in the front of the eye (see picture on the right). The cornea is unique in that it gets its oxygen directly from the air instead of through blood vessels. If the cornea is not getting enough oxygen, blood

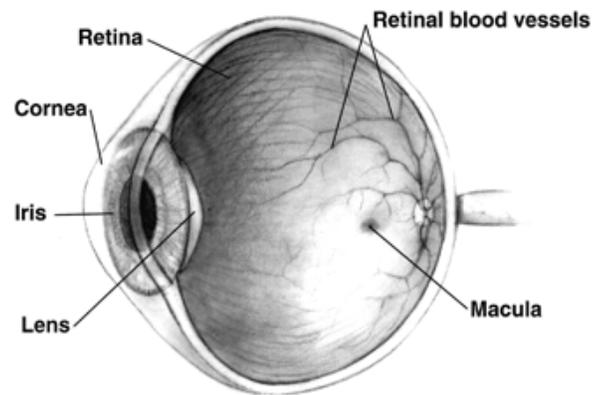


Image used with permission.  
Copyright © VHI 1-800-356-0709

vessels will sometimes form in the cornea to help it get more. Unfortunately, these vessels mean that the cornea is no longer perfectly clear. This may cause your vision to become cloudy or blurry. Severe cases of corneal NV may lead to long-term vision loss.

## What causes corneal neovascularization?

Corneal NV is most often seen in people who wear contact lenses. Contact lenses can irritate the cornea and prevent oxygen from entering the eye, especially when they are not worn properly. Wearing contact lenses while sleeping can increase the chance of corneal NV. If your eyes become irritated after wearing your contact lenses for only a few hours, you should see your eye doctor.

Certain conditions may also lead to corneal NV. Examples include: keratitis (corneal ulcer), bacterial infections, and eye trauma.

### **How is corneal neovascularization treated?**

Treatment for corneal NV will depend on the nature of your condition. Your doctor may prescribe anti-inflammatory eye drops. If your case is more severe, your doctor may recommend a laser or surgical procedure to help prevent vision loss.

If you wear contact lenses, your eye doctor will likely ask for you to decrease the length of time that you wear them or to stop wearing them altogether. It is important that you take proper care of your contact lenses to keep your eyes healthy.

You and your doctor will discuss the treatment that is best for you.

**For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.**



<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1195886-overview>



<http://www.aao.org/publications/eyenet/201310/pearls.cfm>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Kathleen Koviak, MPH Candidate  
Reviewers: Christopher Hood, MD and Gale Oren, MILS

Unless otherwise noted, Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

Last Revised 03/2015