

# Emergencies and Injuries of the Conjunctiva, Sclera, and Cornea

OphA

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## KEY POINTS

- The conjunctiva is a clear vascular tissue that supplies the eyelids and sclera with oxygen and nutrients.
- Most cases of conjunctivitis are not urgent, but there are some exceptions (such as gonococcal conjunctivitis).
- The sclera is the white, opaque, elastic collagen tissue that encompasses the globe from the cornea to the optic nerve, giving the eye its shape and form.
- Scleritis, an inflammation of the sclera, can cause extreme pain and photophobia and lead to perforation of the globe.
- The cornea is the clear avascular structure at the front of the eye that must remain clear for good vision.
- The cornea contains thousands of nerve endings and therefore is very sensitive to touch or injury.
- Corneal injuries or infections should usually be seen on an urgent basis because of the cornea's vital role in maintaining good vision.
- Chemical burns are an emergency and the patient must be instructed to flush the eye for at least 20 minutes before leaving for treatment.
- Conjunctival and corneal foreign bodies need to be seen on an urgent or emergent basis.
- Lacerations of ocular tissues are usually an emergency situation.