

Conjunctiva, Episclera, and Sclera

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KEY POINTS

- The conjunctiva is the vascular mucous membrane that covers the anterior globe and the inner surface of the eyelids. This membrane plays a role in the immunological defense system of the external eye.
- The bulbar conjunctiva covers the globe itself, while the palpebral conjunctiva is attached to the tarsal plates of the eyelids.
- The episclera is the outermost layer of the sclera and has an extensive blood supply from the anterior ciliary arteries. Inflammation makes these vessels much more visible (when viewed with a slit lamp), as they lie just posterior to the bulbar conjunctiva.
- The sclera is the firm, protective, white housing for the inner contents of the globe. It is composed of dense collagen fibers.