

# Understanding Broken Blood Vessels in the Eye: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment

A broken blood vessel in the eye, medically known as a subconjunctival haemorrhage, is a common and usually benign condition. It occurs when a small blood vessel breaks just underneath the clear surface of the eye (the conjunctiva), resulting in a bright red or dark patch on the white part of the eye (the sclera). Although it can look alarming, a subconjunctival haemorrhage is typically harmless and resolves on its own without medical intervention.

broken blood vessel in eye

## Causes of Broken Blood Vessels in the Eye

Several factors can lead to a broken blood vessel in the eye, including:

1. **Trauma or Injury:** A direct blow to the eye, vigorous rubbing, or even minor trauma can cause blood vessels to break.
2. **Straining:** Actions that increase pressure in the head and eyes, such as heavy lifting, coughing, sneezing, vomiting, or straining during bowel movements, can result in a broken blood vessel.
3. **Hypertension:** High blood pressure can weaken the blood vessels, making them more susceptible to breaking.
4. **Medications:** Blood-thinning medications, such as aspirin, warfarin, or other anticoagulants, can increase the risk of bleeding, including in the eyes.
5. **Eye Infections or Allergies:** Inflammation from infections or allergic reactions can lead to eye rubbing, which in turn may cause blood vessels to rupture.
6. **Diabetes:** Individuals with diabetes are at higher risk of experiencing broken blood vessels in the eye due to vascular changes associated with the disease.
7. **Ageing:** As we age, our blood vessels can become more fragile and prone to breaking.

## Symptoms of a Broken Blood Vessel in the Eye

The primary symptom of a subconjunctival haemorrhage is a bright red or dark patch on the sclera. This condition is usually painless and does not affect vision. Other symptoms might include:

- **Mild Eye Discomfort:** Some people experience a scratchy sensation on the surface of the eye.
- **Localised Redness:** The redness is typically confined to one part of the sclera and does not spread.
- **No Discharge or Itching:** Unlike conjunctivitis (pink eye), a subconjunctival hemorrhage does not cause discharge or significant itching.

## Diagnosis and When to See a Doctor

In most cases, a broken blood vessel in the eye is diagnosed based on its appearance. However, it is important to seek medical attention if you experience:

- **Recurrent Haemorrhages:** Frequent occurrences of broken blood vessels may indicate an underlying health issue.
- **Eye Pain:** If the haemorrhage is accompanied by pain, it could be a sign of a more serious condition.
- **Changes in Vision:** Blurred vision, double vision, or loss of vision should be promptly evaluated.
- **Large or Spreading Hemorrhages:** Extensive bleeding or blood that spreads into other parts of the eye may require medical assessment.

## Treatment and Prevention

A subconjunctival hemorrhage typically resolves on its own within one to two weeks without treatment. To alleviate discomfort and support healing, you can:

- **Use Artificial Tears:** Over-the-counter lubricating eye drops can relieve dryness and discomfort.
- **Avoid Rubbing Your Eyes:** This prevents further irritation or injury.
- **Manage Underlying Conditions:** Controlling blood pressure, diabetes, and other health issues can reduce the risk of recurrence.

Preventive measures include:

- **Protecting Your Eyes:** Wear protective eyewear during activities that pose a risk of eye injury.
- **Managing Allergies:** Treat allergies promptly to avoid excessive eye rubbing.
- **Regular Medical Checkups:** Routine health checkups can help detect and manage conditions that might contribute to broken blood vessels.

## Conclusion

A [broken blood vessel in eye](#), while often startling in appearance, is usually a minor condition that heals on its own without lasting effects. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and appropriate responses can help manage this condition effectively. If you experience frequent or severe symptoms, consulting with a healthcare provider is important to rule out more serious issues and receive appropriate care. Taking steps to protect your eyes and manage underlying health conditions can also minimise the risk of future occurrences.