

# Eye Problems and Sickle Cell Trait: Learn How You Can Help Protect Your Vision



People with sickle cell trait (SCT) who experience an eye injury are more likely to develop eye problems including bleeding in the eye followed by a buildup of pressure inside the eye. This can lead to blurry vision or loss of vision, and may even cause permanent eye damage. Therefore, if you have SCT and have suffered an eye injury, it is important that you get checked out right away by an eye specialist who can closely monitor your care.

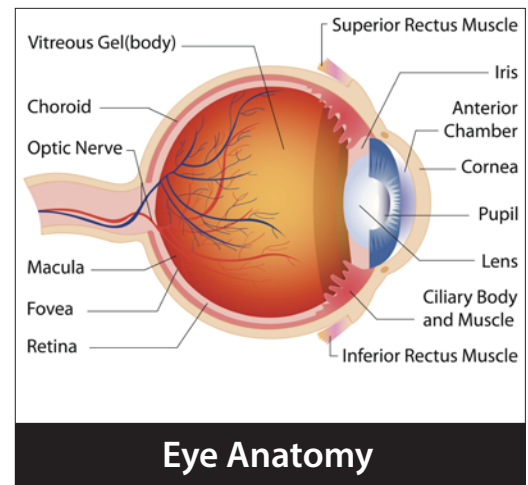
## My doctor said I'm at risk for glaucoma post-hyphema? What's that?

Hyphema is the presence of blood in the fluid-filled space inside the eye between the clear covering of the eye (the cornea) and the colored part of the eye (the iris). This space between the cornea and iris is called the anterior chamber of the eye.

This bleeding, or hyphema, into the anterior chamber may follow an eye injury. Hyphema is rare, but it is serious.

Glaucoma, or increased pressure within the eye, can occur after hyphema. It is called glaucoma post-hyphema.

If you have SCT and have experienced an eye injury, you are more likely to develop eye problems such as glaucoma post-hyphema. Therefore, after an eye injury, you will need to be monitored closely by an eye specialist, called an ophthalmologist.



## How can I tell if I have glaucoma post-hyphema? What are the warning signs?

Hyphema occurs after trauma or injury to the eye. The symptoms of hyphema include pain, discomfort and difficulty seeing in bright light, and vision changes, such as blurred or decreased vision, or total loss of vision. Following hyphema, if the vision problems do not go away with treatment, it may be due to either a buildup of pressure inside the eye (glaucoma) or more bleeding.

## I have SCT. What should I do if I think I may have glaucoma post-hyphema

If you experience eye trauma or injury, you should seek immediate medical attention in an emergency department and let the treating healthcare provider know that you have SCT and have experienced eye trauma.



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## If I have SCT and I develop bleeding in my eye, is there anything I can do to prevent further damage?

Yes! People who experience bleeding in the eye can help prevent further damage by

- Limiting their physical activity;
- Avoiding situations that could lead to further eye trauma;
- Wearing eye protection on their injured eye (an eye patch with a shield); and
- Getting prompt medical care from an ophthalmologist.



## Where can I get more information about eye problems and SCT?

For more information about hyphema and glaucoma post-hyphema, visit the web pages of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus at <http://www.aapos.org/terms/conditions/58>.