

Thyroid eye disease

An information guide



Thyroid eye disease

What is thyroid eye disease?

The thyroid gland is located in the neck and produces hormones which help regulate our metabolism.

Sometimes this gland becomes over or under active due to an imbalance of the immune system, which may result in thyroid eye disease. Thyroid eye disease is a disease of the tissues surrounding the eye within the bony eye socket, which is made of mostly muscles and fat. It can also affect the eyelids.

It is linked strongly with smoking and tends to be worse and more aggressive in people who smoke. The precise cause of thyroid disease is not yet known.

Symptoms of thyroid eye disease:

- Dry eyes due to the lacrimal gland being attacked by the immune system causing a dry gritty sensation. This in turn will increase the tear flow.
- Puffiness of the upper lid and or around the eye especially in the mornings.
- Swelling of the fatty tissues surrounding the eye and muscles that move the eye causing the eyes to protrude forwards.
- 'Starey eyes' appearance due to the eyelids being affected which causes them to retract.
- Double vision due to the eye muscles stiffening.
- The cornea (clear covering of the eye) may become ulcerated due to the swelling but only in severe cases.
- Only in rare cases a deterioration in vision can occur again due to the swelling which can cause the optic nerve to become compressed.

Treatment of thyroid eye disease

Firstly the thyroid function needs to be monitored and treated appropriately by an endocrinologist (a doctor that specialises in hormones).

It is then necessary for an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) to treat and continue to monitor the active eye disease.

- Eye drops such as artificial tears usually gives relief for irritation and redness. These drops are harmless and can be used as and when required.
- Using more pillows to raise the head and taking a diuretic (water tablet) at night may reduce puffiness.
- Decompression surgery is sometimes performed to reposition the protruding eyeballs back into the eye sockets, only when the eye has settled.
- Immunosuppressive treatment may be used to calm down the immune system and reduce swelling behind the eyes. This can include high doses of steroid tablets, steroid injections into the eye sockets and/or radiotherapy.
- If the 'starey eye' is mild it will most probably get better as the eye settles down. Some people find tinted glasses help but if this is severe and persists for a long time surgery may be needed.
- No treatment is required if you suffer from occasional double vision. If the double vision is frequent a prism lens may be added to your glasses. If this does not help squint surgery can be performed to realign the eyes.
- If the vision is deteriorating and cannot be corrected by glasses urgent treatment is then required, as there may be a build up of pressure behind the eye. Immunosuppressive treatment or surgery may be needed to relieve the pressure.

- Over a period of one to two years the disease does burn itself out but unfortunately can leave the eyes disfigured. Cosmetic surgery can be carried out in these cases on the NHS.

All the above will be discussed with you by your ophthalmic specialist so that the best treatment is given in accordance with your own specific eye problems.

Contact Numbers

The Royal Oldham Hospital, Oldham

A&E Department - 0161 627 8923

Friday 5pm until Monday 9am

Oldham Integrated Care Centre Eye Clinic -0161 621 3721

Monday – Friday 9am - 4.30pm

Rochdale Infirmary, Rochdale

Eye Clinic - 01706 901757

Monday - Thursday 9am until 5pm. Friday 9am until 12.30pm

Eye Ward - 01706 901766

Monday - Friday 8am until 8pm

Urgent Care Centre - 01706 517005

Monday - Friday after 8pm. Friday 8pm until Monday 9am

Fairfield General, Bury

Eye Outpatients Clinic - 0161 778 2804

A&E Department - 0161 778 2600

Monday - Friday after 8pm. Friday 8pm until Monday 8am

Notes:

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو ، براہ کرم ترجمانی اور ترجمہ خدمت سے رابطہ کریں

Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

ইংরাজী যদি আপনার প্রথম ভাষা না হয় এবং আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে দোভাষী এবং অনুবাদ পরিষেবাটিতে যোগাযোগ করুন

إذا لم تكن الإنجليزية هي لغتك الأولى وتحتاج إلى مساعدة ، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الشفوية والتحريرية

☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

To improve our care environment for Patients, Visitors and Staff, **Northern Care Alliance NHS Group** is Smoke Free including buildings, grounds & car parks.

For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897


For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

 www.facebook.com/NorthernCareAllianceNHSGroup

 www.linkedin.com/company/northern-care-alliance-nhs-group

 Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) @NCAlliance_NHS

Date of publication: December 2007

Date of review: December 2019

Date of next review: December 2021

Ref: PI_SU_405

© The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group

www.pat.nhs.uk

www.northerncarealliance.nhs.uk

