

Idaho Falls Pediatrics

Foreign Body in Eye

A foreign body is something such as an eyelash, sawdust, sand, or dirt can that gets into the eyes. The main symptom is irritation or pain.

First Aid

- **Glass fragments in eye**

With your child bending forward, try to get flakes of glass off the skin by blowing on the closed eyelids. A few pieces may be removed by touching them with a piece of Scotch tape. Pour water over the eyelids and face to get off any remaining glass. Cover the eyes with a wet washcloth and call your child's health care provider. The eye should not be rubbed.

- **Small particles in eye**

If there are a lot of small particles in the eye (such as dirt or sand), clean around the eye with a wet washcloth first. Then have your child try to open and close the eye repeatedly while submerging that side of the face in a pan of water. If your child is too young to cooperate with this, hold him face up under a gently running warm water tap or pour warm water into the eye. The eyelids must be held open during the irrigation.

- **Particle in a corner of the eye**

If the particle is in the corner of the eye, try to get it out with the corner of a clean handkerchief or a moistened cotton swab.

- **Particle under the lower lid**

If the particle is under the lower eyelid, pull the lower lid out by depressing the cheek and touch the particle with a moistened cotton swab. If that doesn't work, try pouring water on the speck while holding the lid out.

- **Particle under the upper lid**

If the particle can't be seen, it's probably under the upper lid (the most common hiding place). Try having your child open and close the eye several times while his face is submerged in a cake pan or pie pan of water. If this fails, pull the upper lid out and draw it over the lower lid. This will sometimes dislodge the particle.

Call Idaho Falls Pediatrics Immediately If:

- The object hit the eye at high speed (as from striking metal on metal or metal on stone).
- The foreign object is sharp.
- Irrigation does not remove all the foreign material from the eye (that is, you can see it or the sensation of "grittiness" or pain persists).

(While your child is waiting to be seen by the health care provider, cover his eye with a wet washcloth or bandage it shut to relieve discomfort.)

- Your child's vision does not return to normal after the eye has been irrigated.
- The foreign object has been removed, but tearing and blinking persist.
- You have other questions or concerns.

*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.