



giant papillary conjunctivitis

a closer look

WHAT IS GIANT PAPILLARY CONJUNCTIVITIS?

Giant papillary conjunctivitis (GPC) is a condition where the inner surface of the eyelid becomes irritated.

It is most commonly related to wearing contact lenses. GPC occurs both in patients who use soft and rigid gas-permeable contact lenses, though it occurs much more frequently in soft contact lens wearers. The condition can appear at any time, even after many years of wearing contact lenses with no problems.

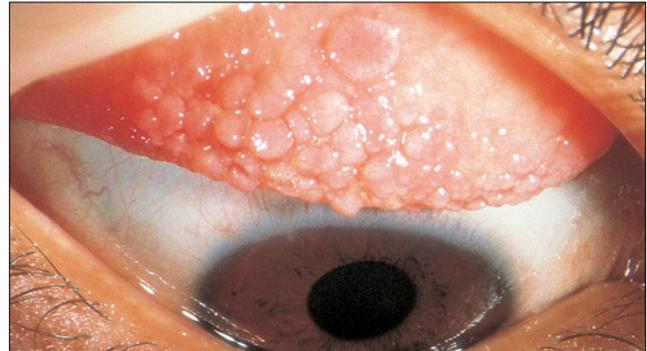
Rarely, people who are not contact lens wearers can get GPC, such as people who wear artificial eyes or who have exposed sutures (stitches) in their eye.

WHAT CAUSES GPC?

GPC is thought to be caused by one or more of the following:

- Allergic reaction to a contact lens or to the chemicals used to clean contact lenses;
- Rubbing of contact lens against the eyelid;
- Deposits on the lenses.

If you wear contact lenses and have asthma, hay fever or other allergies, you may be more likely to get GPC.



In giant papillary conjunctivitis, large bumps (papillae) appear on the underside of the eyelid.

REPRODUCED, WITH PERMISSION, FROM SUTPHIN JE, BASIC AND CLINICAL SCIENCE COURSE SECTION 8: EXTERNAL DISEASE AND CORNEA, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, 2006-2007.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GPC?

Normally, the underside of your eyelid is very smooth. In the early stages of GPC, this area of the eyelid becomes rough, red and swollen. Then bumps (called papillae) form and can grow larger than 1 millimeter (about the size of a pinhead) in diameter.

Symptoms include:

- Itching;
- Burning;
- Foreign body sensation;
- Increased mucus drainage;
- Redness;
- Blurred vision (due to mucus sticking to the contact lens);
- Swollen or droopy eyelids.

Some people with GPC also notice that their contact lenses tend to ride up on their eyes when they blink, as though the lenses were sticking to their eyelid.

If it is not taken care of, GPC can damage eye tissue and the cornea (the clear front window of the eye) as the large bumps underneath the eyelid rub against the eye.

HOW IS GPC TREATED?

GPC may be treated by:

- Discontinuing use of contact lenses for several days or weeks to let the irritation heal and disappear;
- Using eyedrop medicine to reduce swelling and itchiness;
- Changing the type of contact lenses you wear;
- Cleaning your contact lenses more frequently with enzymes;
- Not using preserved lens solutions, and switching to unpreserved salt solutions;
- Limiting the amount of time you wear your lenses each day.

GPC can be an ongoing problem. If you notice symptoms of GPC returning, you should see your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) immediately. If GPC keeps coming back, your ophthalmologist may suggest that you not wear contact lenses at all.

Your ophthalmologist will work with you to find the best way to treat GPC.

NOTES

COMPLIMENTS OF:

Academy reviewed 09/11

© 2011 American Academy of Ophthalmology. The American Academy of Ophthalmology, The Eye M.D. Association and the Academy logo are registered trademarks of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.