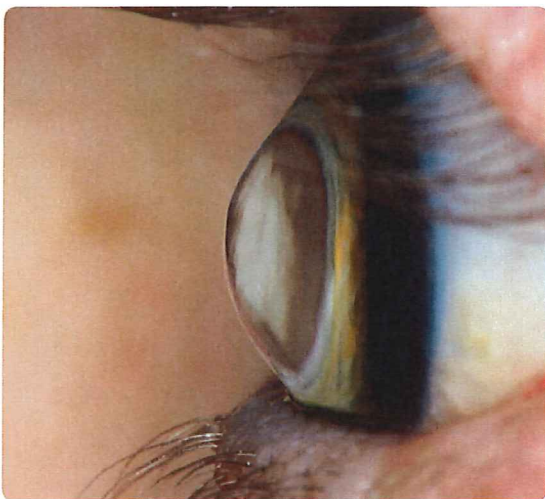


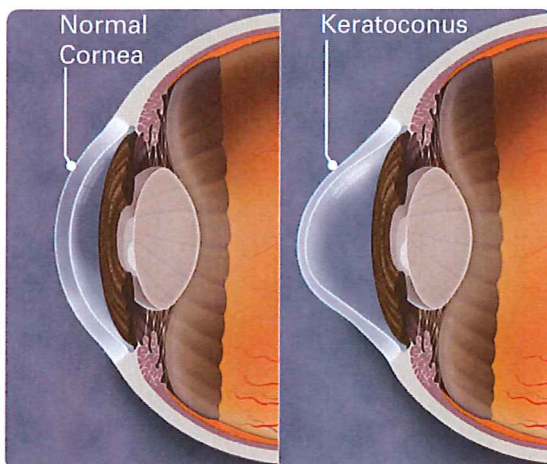
Keratoconus

What is keratoconus?

Your cornea is the clear, dome-shaped window at the front of your eye. It focuses light into your eye. Keratoconus is when the cornea thins out and bulges like a cone. Changing the shape of the cornea brings light rays out of focus. As a result, your vision is blurry and distorted, making daily tasks like reading or driving difficult.



An eye with keratoconus.



What causes keratoconus?

Doctors do not know for sure why people have keratoconus. In some cases, it appears to be genetic (passed down in families). About 1 out of 10 people with keratoconus have a parent who has it too.

Keratoconus often starts when people are in their late teens to early 20s. The vision symptoms slowly get worse over a period of about 10–20 years.

What are keratoconus symptoms?

Keratoconus often affects both eyes. Symptoms can differ in each eye, and they can change over time.

In the early stage, keratoconus symptoms can include:

- mild blurring of vision
- slightly distorted vision, where straight lines look bent or wavy
- increased sensitivity to light and glare
- eye redness or swelling

In later stages, keratoconus symptoms often include:

- more blurry and distorted vision
- increased nearsightedness or astigmatism (when your eye cannot focus as well as it should). As a result, you may need new eyeglass prescriptions often.

- not being able to wear contact lenses. They may no longer fit properly and they are uncomfortable.

Keratoconus usually takes years to go from early to late stage. For some people, though, keratoconus can get worse quickly. The cornea can swell suddenly and start to scar. When the cornea has scar tissue, it loses its smoothness and becomes less clear. As a result, vision grows even more distorted and blurry.

How is keratoconus diagnosed?

Keratoconus can be diagnosed through a routine eye exam. Your ophthalmologist will examine your cornea, and may measure its curve. This helps show if there is a change in its shape. Your ophthalmologist may also map your cornea's surface using a special computer. This detailed image shows the condition of the cornea's surface.

How is keratoconus treated?

Keratoconus treatment depends on your symptoms. When your symptoms are mild, your vision can be corrected with eyeglasses. Later, you may need to wear rigid contact lenses to reduce visual distortion.

Here are other ways that your ophthalmologist might treat keratoconus:

- **Intacs.** This is a small curved device that your ophthalmologist surgically puts in your cornea. Intacs help flatten curve of your cornea to improve vision.
- **Collagen cross-linking.** Your ophthalmologist uses a special laser and eye drops to strengthen the cornea's collagen fibers. Doing this helps to flatten or stiffen your cornea, keeping it from bulging further.
- **Corneal transplant.** When symptoms are severe, your ophthalmologist may suggest a corneal transplant. Your ophthalmologist replaces all or part of your diseased cornea with healthy donor cornea tissue.

Don't rub your eyes!

With keratoconus, try to avoid rubbing your eyes. This can damage thin corneal tissue and make your symptoms worse.

Summary

With keratoconus, the cornea thins and bulges out like a cone, affecting vision.

Keratoconus treatment depends on your symptoms. With mild symptoms, eyeglasses can correct your vision. Rigid contact lenses may help reduce visual distortion.

Surgery may be needed to help flatten the cornea and improve vision. Intacs are small devices surgically placed in your cornea to flatten the curve. Another option is called collagen cross-linking. Your ophthalmologist uses a special laser and eye drops to strengthen the cornea's collagen fibers. This helps to flatten or stiffen your cornea, keeping it from bulging further. In some cases, a cornea transplant may be needed to improve vision.

For more about keratoconus, scan this code with your smartphone or visit <http://bit.ly/keratoconus>.



COMPLIMENTS OF: