



## Trachoma

### What is Trachoma?

- It occurs on the surface (cornea and conjunctiva) of the eye.
- It is a chronic infection, caused by the **micro organism** *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
- If untreated, this disease can lead to blindness.
- It is most common in developing and rare in developed countries.
- The infection usually starts in childhood with symptoms such as sore, watering eyes.
- After repeated infections the symptoms can worsen to turning-in eyelashes, scarring, opacity of the cornea and finally blindness.

### How is Trachoma transmitted?

- It is most common among children, where it spread through hand and finger contact when they play.
- Trachoma is transmitted from one person to another by finger or hand contact with the eyes and or flies.
- Trachoma usually occurs in dry dusty areas, where there is a scarcity of water for regular washing of face and hands.
- It is found where unhygienic conditions occur through a lack of water in water-scarce areas.
- Handling of contaminated items, such as towels and face cloths, can also spread it.

### How can Trachoma be treated?

- Early treatment with antibiotic medicine can prevent scarring and blindness.
- Surgery might be necessary once the eyelids have turned in.
- Once corneal scarring occurs, corneal graft surgery might be necessary.

### How can Trachoma be prevented?

- Children should be trained to wash their faces and hands properly and often.
- Early diagnosis and treatment of eye infections can prevent scarring and blindness.

Reference: DWAF (2003). Management of water-related microbial diseases, RSA

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