

# Anterior Uveitis (Iritis)

*Swelling in the Middle of Your Eye*

## Anterior Uveitis

Anterior uveitis is an inflammation (swelling) in the middle layer of your eye. It develops behind the sclera (the white part of your eye) and in front of the retina.

The middle layer is called the uvea and consists of:

- the iris
- the ciliary body (produces aqueous humor)
- the choroid (nourishes part of the retina).

Any of the three parts of the uvea can become inflamed. Most cases of anterior uveitis involve the iris.

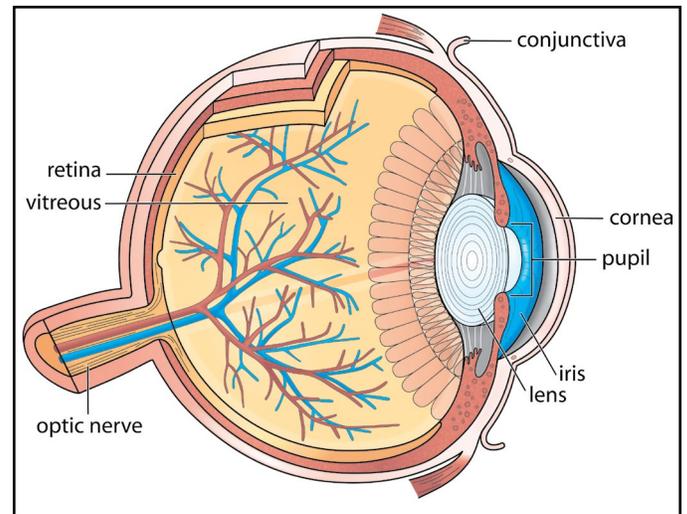
Anterior uveitis often occurs in just one eye. It can be acute (lasts a short time) or chronic (lasts a long time).

Uveitis is a leading cause of blindness in the U.S., so it is important you go to an eye care provider right away.

## Causes of Uveitis

There are several causes of uveitis, but it is often difficult to pinpoint what started the inflammation. Causes of uveitis include:

- infection (viral, bacterial, fungal or parasitic)
- eye trauma or injury
- autoimmune disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis
- systemic disease, such as Lyme disease.



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**Uveitis is a swelling of the middle layer of the eye. Because uveitis often involves the iris, the condition is also known as iritis.**

## Signs of Uveitis

- red, sore eye
- blurry vision
- sensitivity to light
- eye pain
- floaters.

## Diagnosing Uveitis

Your eye care provider will look at the inside of your eye to check for signs of uveitis and find out how severe it is. In some cases, he or she will also use lab tests to help learn the cause or rule out other eye problems that look similar to uveitis.

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## Treating Uveitis

Your eye care provider will talk with you about a treatment plan that may include:

- prescription eye drops to reduce inflammation and pain
- anti-inflammatory medicine
- antibiotics
- treatments for autoimmune or systemic diseases.

With treatment, most cases of anterior uveitis will last from a few days to a few weeks.

## Recurrence of Anterior Uveitis

Once you've had anterior uveitis, you are at risk for it recurring. It is important to know the signs of uveitis and contact your eye care provider right away if you think you have it again.

Early treatment each time can help prevent complications (problems) such as:

- glaucoma (an eye disease that can lead to blindness)
- cataract (a clouding of the eye that makes it hard to see)
- retinal detachment
- permanent (long term) vision loss.