

# Nerve graft for corneal denervation

Information for the public

Published: 29 June 2022

[www.nice.org.uk](https://www.nice.org.uk)

There is not enough evidence about how well this procedure works or how safe it is. So, it can only be done with special arrangements. This means you will have regular appointments afterwards to check how well it is working or if it has caused problems.

Blinking helps prevent infection and keeps the eye healthy by spreading a film of tears across the clear layer at the front of the eye (cornea). When nerves to the cornea are damaged (denervation), feeling is lost and blinking happens less often. This makes the cornea vulnerable to infection and ulcers, which can result in poor vision. In this procedure, under general anaesthesia, one end of a piece of another nerve (the nerve graft) is attached to a healthy nerve, usually above the eye. The other end is passed under the skin and inserted around the damaged cornea. Over several months, new nerve endings grow into the cornea from the graft. The aim is to protect the cornea by improving healing, to reduce infections and the need for eye drops.

## Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

## Some questions to think about

- How many appointments will I need?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

## Information and support

- [NICE's information on HealthTech guidance](#) explains what HealthTech is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on HealthTech recommendations](#) explains what special arrangements are.

This organisation can give you advice and support: [Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\)](#), 0303 123 9999.

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

ISBN: 978-1-4731-8527-2