

Contact Details

If you have any questions please telephone the RUH Emergency Department on

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net
or telephone 01225 825656.

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Arc Eye – Welder’s Flash



Arc Eye (Welder's flash)

This is a condition caused by looking at ultra violet (UV) light, e.g. from a welding arc, a sunlamp or light reflected from the snow without the use of protective goggles or a face shield.

This causes superficial burning to the front of the eye(s) and occasionally the eyelids and develops 6-10 hours after the incident. As this area is very sensitive it is a painful condition but will heal up within 24-48 hours without any long-term complications.

To ease the discomfort, if required, take the painkillers you would normally take if you had a headache, but do not exceed the stated dose.

The aim of the treatment is to prevent infection, rest the eye and allow the superficial cells which have been burnt to regenerate.

The only way to prevent this condition occurring is to:

- a) Wear protective goggles or a face shield whenever welding or in the vicinity of welders and to avoid watching or assisting welders unless wearing eye protection.
- b) Always wear protective goggles if using a sunbed or lamp
- c) Wear protective dark glasses in snowy conditions when sunlight is reflected off the snow

