

What Is a Pinguecula and a Pterygium (Surfer's Eye)?

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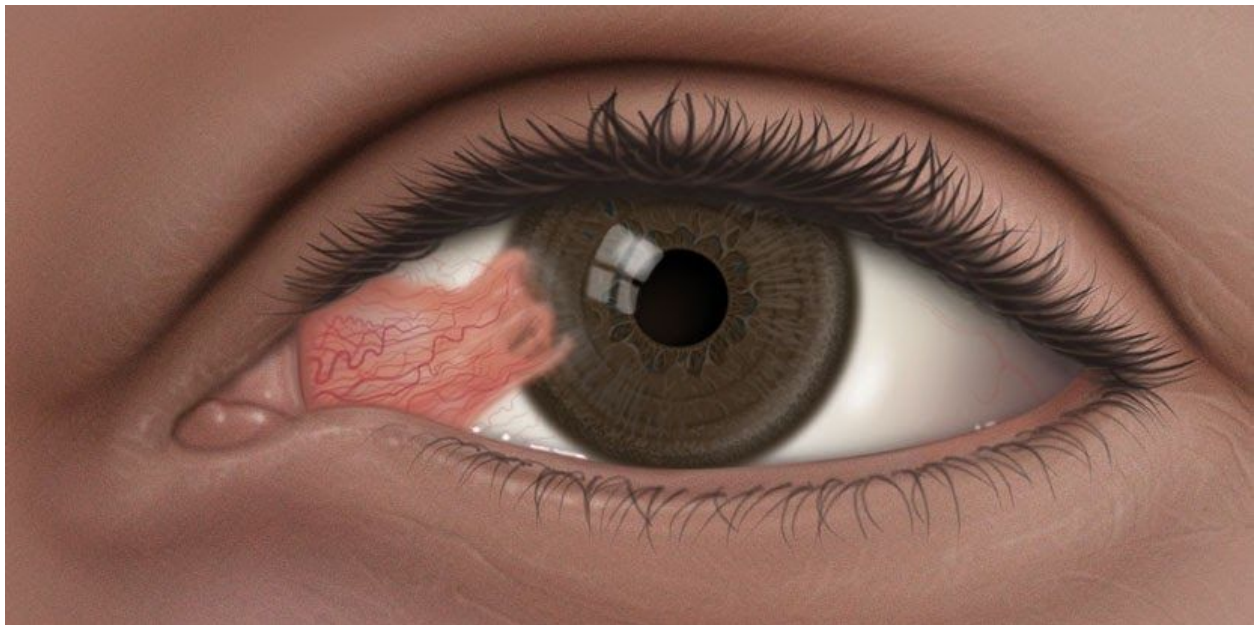
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Pinguecula and pterygium are growths on your eye's [conjunctiva](#), the clear covering over the [white part of the eye](#).

Pinguecula is a [yellowish, raised growth](#) on the conjunctiva. It's usually on the side of the eye near your nose, but can happen on the other side too. A pinguecula is a deposit of protein, fat, or calcium.

Pterygium is a growth of fleshy tissue (has blood vessels) that may start as a pinguecula. It can remain small or grow large enough to cover part of the [cornea](#). When this happens, it can affect your vision.



Both pinguecula and pterygium are believed to be caused by a combination of exposure to [ultraviolet \(UV\) light from the sun](#), wind and dust.

Avoiding pinguecula and pterygium

If you have had a pinguecula or a pterygium at least once before, try to avoid the things that cause these growths. Here are some ways:

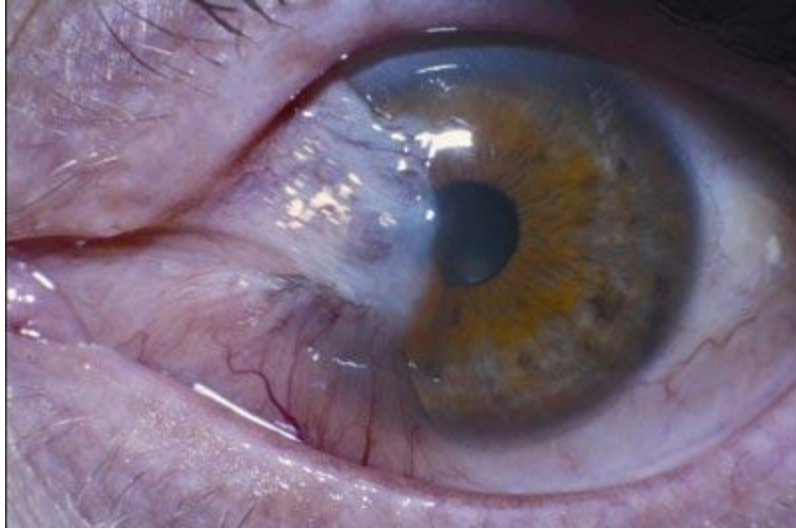
- wear [sunglasses](#) to protect your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) light
- protect your eyes from dust by wearing [glasses](#) or goggles
- use [artificial tears](#) when your eyes are dry

Symptoms of pinguecula and pterygium can range from mild to severe. They include:

- redness and swelling of the [conjunctiva](#), mostly while the pterygium grows
- a yellow spot or bump on the [white of your eye](#)
- dry, itchy, [burning eyes](#). Or [feeling like sand or grit is stuck in your eye](#)
- [blurry vision](#)



In many cases pinguecula and pterygium do not need to be treated. However, if your eyes are uncomfortable or your vision is affected, you may need treatment.



Pinguecula treatment

[Drops to lubricate your eyes](#) can help relieve irritation from pinguecula. They also help relieve that annoying feeling as if you have something in your eye. If pinguecula causes redness and swelling in your eye, your doctor may prescribe steroid eye drops.

Usually eye drops can relieve any discomfort from pinguecula, and surgery is usually not recommended or needed.

Pterygium treatment

Your ophthalmologist can treat the discomfort, redness or swelling from a pterygium with lubricating or steroid eye drops.

If a pterygium grows large enough to cause problems, your [ophthalmologist](#) will probably recommend surgery to remove it. Once the pterygium is removed, your surgeon may transplant a thin piece of normal tissue onto the affected area. This technique helps reduce the chance that your pterygium will grow back.

The best way to keep pinguecula and pterygium from coming back is to avoid [sunlight](#), dryness and dust.

Sources:

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/pinguecula-ptyerygium>

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/pinguecula-ptyerygium-symptoms>

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/pinguecula-ptyerygium-diagnosis-treatment>