

Pinguecula

Overview

A pinguecula (pin gwe' cue la) is a benign, yellowish growth that forms on the **conjunctiva**. They usually grow near the cornea on the nasal side. Pingueculae (plural form of pinguecula) are thought to be caused by ultraviolet light and are most common among people who spend a great deal of time outdoors.

This growth does not affect vision, but may cause irritation if it becomes elevated. In rare cases, the pinguecula may gradually extend over the **cornea**, forming a pterygium.

Signs and Symptoms

Pingueculae are harmless growths and rarely cause symptoms.

- Yellowish, raised area on the conjunctiva
- Irritation and scratchiness
- **Dry eye**
- Occasional inflammation of the conjunctiva
- Redness if the area becomes irritated

Detection and Diagnosis

Pingueculae can often be seen with the naked eye; however, the doctor diagnoses the growth with a careful examination with a **slit lamp microscope**.

Treatment

Because of their benign nature, pingueculae rarely require treatment. Occasionally, the growth may become inflamed, causing irritation and dryness. The doctor may prescribe artificial tears for lubrication and mild anti-inflammatory medication to reduce swelling.