WHAT IS TRICHIASIS?

Eyelashes usually grow away from the eye. In trichiasis, some lashes grow toward the eye. These lashes may rub against the eye and make it sore. Over time, they can scratch or scar the eye.

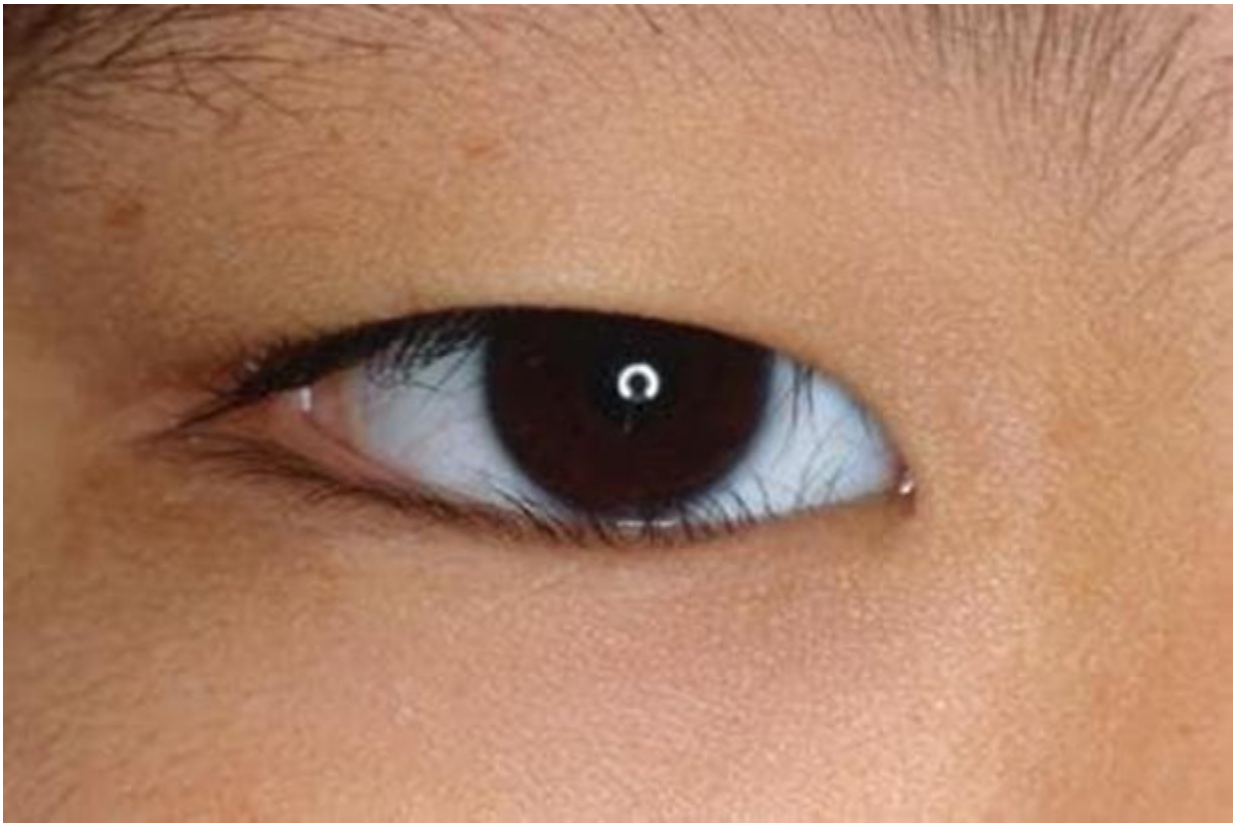

Figure 1. Trichiasis in a child, which shows eyelashes growing toward the eye. (Source: https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1213321-clinical?form=fpf, last accessed 11/2/2023)

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF TRICHIASIS?

Some people have no symptoms. Others may have eye pain, redness, tears, or sensitivity to light. They may feel as if something is in the eye. Lashes rubbing against the eye can scratch the cornea, the clear front part of the eye. These scratches may cause an eye infection or a scar.

Over time, a person may no longer feel the lashes rubbing. Even with no pain, the lashes can still harm the eye and blur vision.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF TRICHIASIS?

Trichiasis has many causes. With age, changes in the eyelids can make lashes turn inward. Rubbing the eyes a lot may also play a role.

Blepharitis makes the eyelids red or swollen. It can cause lashes to grow the wrong way. Some children have extra skin on the lower eyelid. This is called epiblepharon. The skin pushes the lashes toward the eye. It is more common in Asian and Hispanic children. It often gets better as a child grows.

Some people have an extra row of lashes. This is called distichiasis. These lashes may also rub the eye.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR TRICHIASIS?

In some children, the lashes may stop rubbing the eye as the lid grows. They may not need treatment if the eye is not harmed. Eye drops called artificial tears or eye ointment can help protect the eye. A doctor may use antibiotic eye drops for a scratch or infection.

A doctor can pull out lashes that rub the eye. This helps for a short time, but the lashes may grow back. If the lashes keep causing harm, an eye doctor may treat or remove the roots so the lashes do not grow back.

If the lid turns lashes toward the eye, surgery can help move the lid and lashes to a better spot. This can help stop more harm to the eye.

MORE SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND:

https://eyewiki.org/Trichiasis

Summary

Trichiasis is when lashes grow toward the eye. These inward-growing lashes can cause pain, red eyes, tears, or scratches on the cornea. Without care, these lashes may cause an eye to get infected or develop a scar. Vision may also get worse. Treatments may include eye drops, ointment, lash removal, or surgery. Regular eye exams can help find problems early and protect sight.

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