Emergencies – Cuts and Punctures of Eye or Eyelid

SECTION: 13.13

Strength of Evidence Level: 3

PURPOSE:
To provide prompt attention to prevent further injury and development of infection.

CONSIDERATIONS:
1. Avoid touching the eye. Use very light pressure while applying dressing to prevent further injury.
2. Penetrating (puncture) injuries of the eye are extremely serious and can result in blindness.

EQUIPMENT:
Sterile water or tepid water
Sterile gauze or clean dressing
Tape
Gloves – if available

PROCEDURE:
1. Adhere to Standard Precautions.
2. Explain procedure to patient. With loss of eyesight or bandaging both eyes, the patient can become anxious.
3. If contacts are observed and patient is able, contacts should be removed.
4. Puncture of eye:
   a. Make no attempt to remove object or wash the eyes.
   b. Cover both eyes loosely with sterile or clean dressing secured with tape. Avoid pressure on the eyes. Coverage of both eyes is necessary to prevent movement of affected eye.
   c. Keep victim quiet and lying on his/her back.
   d. Arrange immediate transfer to emergency treatment center.
5. Injury of eyelid:
   a. Stop hemorrhaging by gently applying direct pressure.
   b. Gently rinse wound with sterile water (if available) or tepid tap water, and apply sterile or clean dressing. Tape dressing in place or hold snugly by bandage that encircles the head. Seek medical care immediately.
   c. Bruises above and below the eye should be treated by immediate cold applications to lessen bleeding and swelling.
   d. Discard soiled supplies in appropriate containers.

AFTER CARE:
1. Document in patient's record:
   a. Incident and degree of injury.
   b. Treatment provided.
   d. Whether or not contacts were in place.
2. Contact physician to report incident and obtain further orders.

REFERENCE:
Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice 9th edition 2010