

## **GIANT PAPILLARY CONJUNCTIVITIS (GPC)**

Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis (GPC) is a condition where the inner surfaces of the eye lids become irritated. It is most commonly related to wearing contact lenses. GPC occurs both in patients who use soft and rigid gas permeable contact lenses, though it occurs much more frequently in soft contact lens wearers. The condition can appear at any time, even after many years of wearing contact lenses with no problems. Rarely, people who are not contact lens wearers can get GPC, such as people who wear artificial eyes or who have exposed sutures (stitches) in their eye.

### **WHAT CAUSES GPC?**

GPC is thought to be caused by one or more of the following:

- allergic reaction to a contact lens or to the chemicals used to clean contact lenses;
- rubbing of contact lens against the eyelid;
- deposits on the lenses

If you wear contact lenses and have asthma, hay fever or other allergies, you may be more likely to get GPC.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GPC?**

Normally, the under surface of your eyelid is very smooth. In the early stages of GPC, this area of the eyelid becomes rough, red and swollen. Then giant bumps (called papillae) form. They can grow larger than 1 millimeter in diameter. Symptoms include:

- itching;
- burning;
- appearance of mucous;
- redness in some people;
- blurred vision (due to mucous sticking to the contact lens).

Some people with GPC also notice that their contact lenses tend to ride up on their eyes when they blink, as though the lenses were sticking to their eyelid. If it is not treated, GPC can damage the cornea (the clear front window of the eye) as the large bumps underneath the eyelid rub against it.

### **HOW IS GPC TREATED?**

GPC may be treated by:

- stopping contact lens wear for several days or weeks to let the irritation heal and disappear;
- using eye drops to reduce swelling and itchiness;
- changing the type of contact lenses you wear;
- cleaning your contact lenses more frequently with enzymes;
- not using preserved lens solutions, and switching to unpreserved salt solutions;
- limiting the amount of time you wear your lenses each day.

GPC can be an ongoing problem. If you notice symptoms of GPC returning, you should see your ophthalmologist immediately. If GPC keeps coming back, your ophthalmologist may suggest that you not wear contact lenses at all.