



Eye Care in Critical Care

Aim: To provide guidance on nursing care for the eyes of patients in Critical Care

Scope: All adult patients in Critical Care

ASSESS EYES / PATIENT

- Within **4 hours** of admission¹
- At least **12 hourly** thereafter²

PATIENT AWAKE & ABLE TO BLINK

- Allow patient to perform own eye care (or with assistance when required) by cleaning eyes as part of the patient facial wash or at patients request.
- If eye become sticky or encrusted use sterile gauze and sterile water

Seek senior medical / ophthalmology advice for patients with eye disease, infection or injury, including post-op surgery and chemo/radiotherapy related red eye.

Standard Eye Care

1	Clean eyes with sterile water soaked gauze , cleaning from inner aspect of lids at the nose and sweep across the lids to outer aspect ³ . This prevents the spread of infection or debris being introduced into the lachrymal system .
2	Clean along both sets of lashes; do not drag debris across the surface of the eye.
3	Use new gauze swab for each sweep and for each eye.
4	Apply prescribed ocular lubricant ² .

Sedated Patient (Difficulty Blinking)

- Standard eye care 4 hourly³
- If incomplete eye closure/difficulty blinking apply prescribed lubricant²
- Consider taping eyelids closed, especially during interventions e.g. proning, transfers and procedures.

Sedated & Paralysed (Unable To Blink)

- Lubricate eyes 4 hourly
- If eye closure incomplete with corneal exposure, apply prescribed lubricant and tape eyelids closed²
- Consider taping eyelids closed, especially during interventions e.g. proning, transfers and procedures.

HIGH RISK OF EYE INJURY

Please see your units full guidelines for more information

(V3 2024)



References

- 1 Joyce N. (2002) Eye Care for Intensive Care Patients, A Systematic review No 21. The Joanna Briggs Institute for Evidence Based Nursing and Midwifery.
- 2 Lightman S, Larkin G, McHugh J, Montgomery, H, hingorani, M (2020) Ophthalmic Services Guidance, Eye Care in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Royal College of Ophthalmologists & Intensive Care Society, London.
- 3 Johnson, K & Rolls KD (2014) Eye Cre for Critically Ill Adults. Chatswood, NSW. Agency for Clinical Innovation