

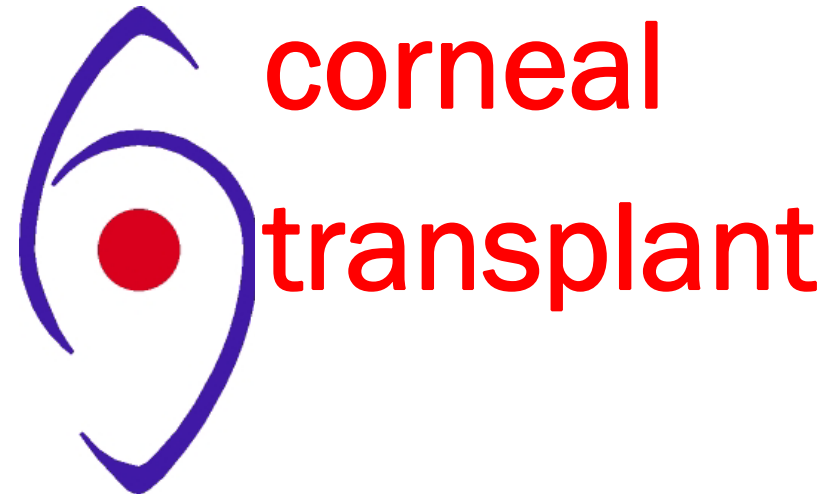
**Visual Impairment Services
Highland**

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Time off from work will vary with individuals and the kind of work that they do. Generally in a sedentary job you should be back to work within a week or two.

What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear window in the very front part of the eye. It can be compared to a watch crystal. Sometimes the cornea becomes clouded and impairs vision. The cornea can be damaged by disease, injury, infection, previous eye surgery or other problems.

Three common problems that may be treated with corneal transplant include:

- the cornea may change shape and begin to protrude outward like a cone, distorting the light as it enters the eye; this condition mainly affects young adults, cause unknown
- the cornea may be affected by previous eye surgery, sometimes becoming cloudy and swollen and causing images to appear faint or washed-out; glare may also be experienced or the swollen cornea may develop painful blisters

- the cornea may be injured by an infection, chemicals or sharp objects; the scar tissue that is created to heal the injury inhibits the transmission of light; objects appear to be very faint or distorted or the sight may be limited to only light and shadow

What is involved in corneal transplant surgery?

Corneal transplant surgery is the most successful of all transplant procedures.

The surgery involves the partial or total replacement of your cornea (host cornea) with the donor cornea. Total replacement is much more common. The operation can be done under general or local anaesthetic and is increasingly being done as an outpatient without an overnight stay in the hospital, but most still require one to two days hospitalisation.

Recovery and Results

The post-operative recovery is a long one, but most patients do well.

Strenuous activity such as lifting, bending or straining should be avoided for several weeks. A protective shield is required and eye drops are prescribed for several months. The sutures are removed between six months and two years.

The final improvement in vision is gradual and occurs six to twelve months post-operationally.

Most people experience surprisingly little pain or discomfort following the surgery although some irritation is to be expected for about a week