



# The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

## Safety Alert

May 2019



## Spot the difference?



### Corneal burns caused by Silver Nitrate sticks

*A patient attends ED with a corneal foreign body. The doctor attempts removal using what they think is a cotton bud.*

**It's a Silver Nitrate stick.**

*The patient suffers a burn to the cornea, requiring ophthalmology admission...*

***NRLS data shows that this is not a hypothetical risk.***

*In a room dimmed for slit lamp examination, the two sticks are easy to mix up.*

### How to decrease the risk of error in your ED

Keep ENT and eye resources separated.

- Ensure Silver Nitrate applicators are kept in their original packaging.
- After use, ensure remaining applicators are removed from clinical areas and consider locking up.

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**[www.rcem.ac.uk/safetyalerts](http://www.rcem.ac.uk/safetyalerts)**