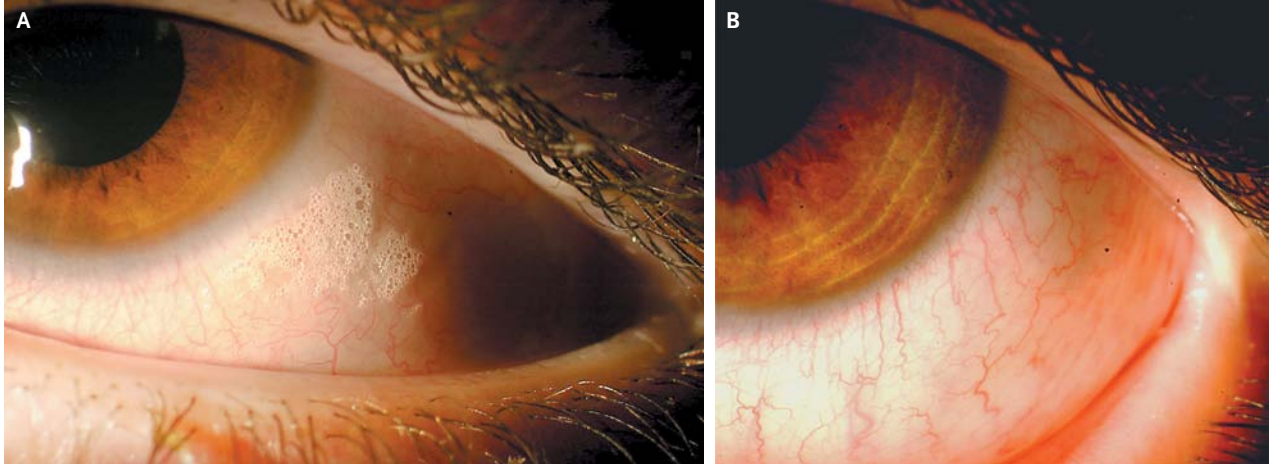


## IMAGES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE

## Bitot's Spot in Vitamin A Deficiency



A 10-YEAR-OLD BOY WITH NO NOTABLE MEDICAL HISTORY PRESENTED with ocular burning. A lesion consisting of a dry, scaly patch with a foamy appearance was observed on the temporal conjunctiva of the left eye (Panel A). Corrected visual acuity was 10/20 in the left eye; the remainder of the ocular examination was normal. Bitot's spot is highly suggestive of vitamin A deficiency and, sometimes, chronic conjunctival inflammation. The condition is characterized by metaplasia of the conjunctival epithelium and tangles of keratin admixed with gas-forming bacteria (e.g., *Corynebacterium xerosis*), giving the lesion its typical foamy appearance. The serum level of vitamin A in this patient was extremely low, at  $<2 \mu\text{g}$  per deciliter ( $0.07 \mu\text{mol}$  per liter; normal range, 30 to  $70 \mu\text{g}$  per deciliter [ $1$  to  $2 \mu\text{mol}$  per liter]); he was given vitamin A supplementation. Vitamin A deficiency affects approximately 140 million children worldwide, making it the second most prevalent nutritional disorder after caloric malnutrition; in developed countries, it can be associated with fat malabsorption. At follow-up approximately 12 months after diagnosis, slit-lamp examination revealed complete healing of the lesion (Panel B), and symptoms were substantially improved.

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DOI: 10.1056/NEJMicm1205309

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