



Dry Eyes

Your Questions Answered

Patient Information Leaflet

The normal action of tears

Normally your eyes are kept moist and comfortable by a thin film of tears. Glands in your eyelids make these tears.

The action of blinking spreads the tears over the surface of the eye.

What do tears do?

The tears contain substances that lubricate, prevent infection and slow down the evaporation of the tears.

What is Dry Eyes?

In some people tears are produced in very small amounts. Sometimes those produced are of very poor quality. This leads to small dry patches on the surface of the eye causing redness, irritation and excessive blinking.

What are the symptoms of Dry Eyes?

- Stinging, burning or a gritty feeling in your eyes
- Eyes may appear slightly red.
- Eyes may feel heavy.
- Eyes may seem sensitive to light.
- Excessive blinking.
- Irritation may lead to excessive watering.

These symptoms may be less when you first wake up but get worse as the day goes on.

Factors that may trigger symptoms

- Times when you blink less often e.g. Reading, driving, watching television or computer work.
- Exposure to fumes, cigarette smoke or dust.
- Air conditioning
- Heating
- Hair dryers.
- Fabric conditioner

What causes of Dry Eyes?

- The most common cause is the failure of the glands in your eyelids to produce tears.

- Certain medicines used to treat other medical conditions can reduce tear production e.g. high blood pressure, kidney disease.
- Less often dry eye maybe a symptom of another medical condition.
- Incomplete eyelid closure leaves the eye exposed to drying.

What tests are carried out?

The eye doctor or specialist nurse will examine the surface of your eyes for damage and assess your tear production.

What does the treatment involve?

The main treatment is the use of artificial tears drops. These can be used as often as is needed to keep your eyes comfortable. Ointments are also available which are usually used at night.

Severe dry eyes maybe relieved by blocking the channel that drain tears into the nose.

This keeps more tears on the surface of the eyes. It can be done on a temporary or permanent basis.

Tips on how to help yourself

- Avoid places where fumes dust or smoke will irritate your eyes.
- Try to blink more often when reading, watching TV or using your computer.
- Use humidifiers at home and work (especially where there is air conditioning).
- Do not direct fans towards your eyes.
- Take short breaks when doing computer work.
- Wear wrap around glasses outdoors to stop the wind from drying your eyes.

We hope that this information is helpful to you. If anything is unclear or you have any other questions you would like to ask, then contact your General Practitioner or:

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Revision History

Ref No.	Version No.	Date Approved	Change	Section No.	Approved by
-	1	2002	New Information Leaflet	-	
PIL 007	2	January 2014	Revised Information Leaflet	all	Hospital Management Group