

Dry Eye Syndrome

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What is Dry Eye Syndrome?

Dry Eye is a common eye condition which affects millions of people on a daily basis. Dry Eye is caused by a lack of tear production, a poor quality tear film, or a rapid evaporation of one's tear film. Multiple factors may influence the development of Dry Eye.

What is my tear film?

The tear film is an essential outer layer of the eye. It is actually composed of 3 distinct layers. The layers consist of an outer oily layer, a middle watery layer, and an inner mucus layer. All of the layers have distinct functions to promote normal eye health. The ultimate purpose is to provide lubrication, oxygen, and nutrients to the eye.

Where do the tears come from and where do they go?

The tears are formed in several glands around the eye and on the eyelids. With the help of "blinking," the tears drain through 2 ducts on the eyelid near the nose. One duct is located on the upper lid and one is located on the lower lid. The ducts eventually connect to the nasal passage.

What are the symptoms of Dry Eye?

The symptoms of dry eye may mimic many other conditions. Some of the more common symptoms involve itching, burning, irritation, redness, blurred vision, excessive tearing, and foreign body sensation.

How do I have Dry Eye if my eyes are watery and always tearing?

The tears are produced as a reflex to outside factors such as irritants, fans, or emotions. These "reflex" tears do little to soothe an eye and are not the same quality as the tears normally produced by the eye. This is why someone with Dry Eyes may actually report having a watery eye.

What are the causes of Dry Eye?

The causes are numerous. Some of the more common causes include: age, hormonal changes, medication use, environmental factors, computer use, contact lens wear, and systemic conditions.

How is Dry Eye Diagnosed?

Dry Eye syndrome can be effectively diagnosed by your eye doctor at Cape Fear Eye Associates through a thorough history along with the clinical examination. Some tests which might be used are an evaluation with a microscope and fluorescein dye. A Schirmer test which measures tear production may be used in some cases. Dry Eye Syndrome can mimic many eye conditions including blepharitis and allergic eye disease making it essential to see your eye care provider for a thorough examination.

How is Dry Eye Treated?

The treatment program must be tailored to the individual person. The same treatment is not effective for everyone. The following are treatment options which may be beneficial:

1. An initial treatment may be life style modification. A healthy diet which includes plenty of water is important in dry eye management. Vitamin supplementation which includes anti-oxidants and Omega-3- Fatty Acids can also be of value in the management of Dry Eye.
2. Topical treatment with artificial tear drops to supplement the natural tears is commonly an initial therapy to relieve the symptoms associated with Dry Eye. Many different kinds of these drops are available and it is important to ask for your doctor's recommendation. Each formulation is unique and will have various benefits. Ophthalmic Gels and ointments may also be used in moderate to severe cases.
3. Prescription Eye drops can also be used to treat dry eye. These drops consist of topical anti-inflammatory drops and Restasis (Allergan). Restasis is a prescription drop which has been shown to decrease inflammation and increase tear production.

For information on Restasis, please visit Allergan's website: www.restasis.com

4. Punctal Occlusion with collagen or silicon plugs can be used to temporarily or permanently block the tear drainage meshwork. This is an in office procedure that is quick, painless, and usually effective when the cause of the dry eye is an insufficient quantity of tears.

For information on a new type of punctal plugs being used in our office, please visit www.medennium.com/prod_dry_eye.htm

5. Many different contact lenses exist today that can help minimize the symptoms of dry eye. Advances in contact lens material along with new contact lens solutions allow people who were previously unable to wear contacts the ability to enjoy improved comfort and clear vision.

Please explore the following contact lenses which we have found to be effective for Dry Eye patients who enjoy contact lens wear.

Acuvue Oasys

See=> www.acuvue.com/acuvue_oasys.htm

Proclear Single Vision and Multifocal

See=> http://www.coopervision.com/us/patient_clensesbycat.asp?id=8

Bausch and Lomb Purevision Single Vision, Toric, and Multifocal

See=> <http://info.bausch.com/purevision/flash.html>

Biomedics XC

See=> http://www.coopervision.com/us/patient_clenses_detail.asp?catid=11&id=48

Extreme H2O

See=> www.extreme_h2o.com

Disclaimer:

All above mentioned medication and contact lens names are property of their respective companies. They are provided for informational purposes. Please see the individual company websites for complete information. The above information is NOT intended to diagnose, treat, or manage any condition. It is solely for informational purposes. Always see your eye care provider for a comprehensive eye examination before undertaking any treatment.