



What you should know

Do you have Dry Eyes?

Tears are made up of more than water — they are a combination of water, oils, and mucus (a fluid that coats the eye and lids to keep them moist). Tears form a film over the eye to lubricate, nourish, and protect it. Dry eyes can result when you don't make enough tears or when there is an imbalance in the tear film.

Symptoms include a feeling that something is in your eye; itchy, burning or scratchy eyes; and blurred vision. Symptoms may be worse in dry, hot, or windy weather conditions or during long periods of driving, reading, using a computer or watching television.

Those with chronic or long-term symptoms are also at greater risk for developing eye allergies, eye infections and permanent vision problems.

There is no cure for chronic dry eye, but many treatment options — from over-the-counter eye drops to prescription drugs and surgery — are available to lessen symptoms.

Cold and allergy medications, heart and blood pressure medications, hormone replacement therapy, and medical conditions such as diabetes and arthritis can increase the likelihood of dry eye symptoms.

Your eye doctor, with the aid of a special microscope, can examine the front surface of your eyes, the tear film that covers them, and your eyelids to determine what is causing your symptoms and the proper treatment to provide relief.

Tips for living with chronic dry eye include:

- Take breaks when using a computer or reading to blink and rest your eyes.
- Wear wrap around sunglasses to protect your eyes from the wind.
- Resist rubbing your eyes.
- Use a humidifier to keep the air in your home or work area moist.
- Do not smoke.
- Avoid secondhand smoke, direct wind, and sitting near vents or fans.
- Drink plenty of water.
- All eye drops are not the same — discuss with your eye doctor which over-the-counter drops will work best for your dry eye condition.



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