

What You Need to Know About Dry Eye

This material will help you understand dry eye and how it is treated.

What is dry eye?

Dry eye can occur if you are not able to produce enough tears or your tears are of poor quality. This can make it harder to keep your eye healthy and comfortable. This condition is very common. Dry eye is usually a chronic (long-term) condition, but the symptoms can be managed.

What causes dry eye?

There are many factors which can contribute to dry eye. The following can make you more likely to have dry eye:

- Being a post-menopausal female
- Lots of screen use (computer, phone, tablet, etc.)
- Certain medications (such as allergy meds, diuretics, anxiety meds, etc.)
- Contact lens wear
- Environment (low humidity, dust, wind, fans, smoking)
- Rosacea, Sjogren's syndrome, and other medical conditions
- Older age

What is the treatment for dry eye?

The first step in treating dry eye is to use artificial tears throughout the day when you are having symptoms. Artificial tears help to moisturize your eye.

- Use a preservative-free version if you are using more than 4 times a day.
- If your eyes are still feeling dry after using artificial tears, or the symptoms are worse in the morning, you should try a thicker gel or ointment form of

an artificial tear at bedtime. The heavy gels and ointments may make your vision blurry, so use right before going to sleep.

The artificial tear drops, gels, and ointments are available over the counter (without a prescription). The list below can help you choose the correct type of eye drops when you are in the store.

In addition to artificial tears, you can apply a warm compress on the eyelids at least once a day. This will help you make more of your own natural tears. A **warm compress** is just a clean washcloth heated under the hottest tap water that feels comfortable on your skin. Wring the washcloth out so it is no longer dripping wet. Leave the compress on your closed eyes for about 5 minutes. You may need to reheat the washcloth to keep it warm. There are also masks that can be heated in the microwave and these stay warmer longer. One good brand is Bruder.

If these treatments are not sufficient, there are several other options to discuss with your eye care provider:

- Prescription eye drops
- Oral medications
- IPL (intense pulsed light)
- Punctal plugs
- Humidifier
- Lid scrubs
- Scleral lenses

The table on the next page lists different types of eyedrops and the brand names so you can search for them.

<p>Mild or disappearing preservative</p> <p>Blink Tears</p> <p>Genteal Mild or Moderate</p> <p>Optive or Optive Advanced</p> <p>Refresh Tears</p> <p>Sooth Hydration</p> <p>Systane/ Systane Ultra</p> <p>Systane Complete</p> <p>Tears Naturale II</p> <p>Theratears</p>	<p>Preservative-free single use vials</p> <p>Blink PF</p> <p>Bion Tears</p> <p>Genteal PF</p> <p>Hypotears PF</p> <p>Optive PF or Optive advanced PF</p> <p>Refresh Plus</p> <p>Soothe PF</p> <p>Systane PF or Systane Ultra PF</p> <p>Tears Naturale Free</p> <p>Theratears PF</p> <p>Visine PF</p>
<p>Thick drops or gels</p> <p>Blink gel drops</p> <p>Genteal (severe)</p> <p>Genteal Geldrop (moderate to severe)</p> <p>Refresh Celluvisc</p> <p>Refresh Liquigel</p> <p>Systane Gel</p> <p>Systane Gel Drop</p> <p>Tears Naturale Forte</p> <p>Theratears Liquid-Gel</p>	<p>Ointments</p> <p>Lacrilube</p> <p>Refresh PM</p> <p>Soothe Night Time Ointment</p> <p>Tears Naturale PM</p>

<p>Oil-based drops</p> <p>Soothe XP</p> <p>Systane Balance</p>	<p>For contact lenses</p> <p>Aquify Comfort Drop</p> <p>Blink Contacts</p> <p>Boston Rewetting (Gas Permeable lenses only)</p> <p>Complete Moisture Plus</p> <p>Clerz Plus</p> <p>All Refresh Products</p> <p>Thera Tears Contact Lens</p>
<p>Preservative-free gel drops</p> <p>Refresh Celluvisc (available in single use vials)</p> <p>Refresh Optive Mega 3</p>	

Where can I learn more?

For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.

- What Is Dry Eye? Symptoms, Causes and Treatment (American Academy of Ophthalmology)
<https://tinyurl.com/2dhr6kx4>



- Dry Eye Syndrome (University of Michigan Health-Kellogg Eye Center)
<https://michmed.org/BzdDD>



Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan

Authors: Sara Dougherty Wood OD, MS, FAAO; Colleen Podd OD
Reviewers: Gale Oren MILS; Maria Woodward MD, MS
Edited by: Karelyn Munro BA

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 04/2022