

Other Causes of Dry Eye

A lack of tears, improper lubrication, or tears draining too quickly from the eye result in a condition known as Dry Eye. Dry eye is a common problem that is easily diagnosed.



Aging

As we age, tear production decreases. Men and women of any age can be affected, however, after menopause and during pregnancy women are especially susceptible.



Contact Lenses

Wearing contact lenses often increases tear evaporation that can result in irritation, increased protein deposits, infection, and discomfort. Dry Eye has been shown to be the leading cause of contact lens discomfort and reduced wear time.



Environment

Exposure to various environments can reduce eye lubrication. These include sunny, dry or windy conditions; heaters, dehumidifiers, fans or air conditioning; sand, dust or pollen, smoke, high altitudes; work settings and prolonged computer use.



Medications

A variety of medications reduce tear secretion. Some common examples are decongestants, antihistamines, sleeping pills, beta-blockers, antidepressants, diuretics, pain relievers, oral medications, and alcohol.



Autoimmune Disease

Many diseases and disorders can cause dry eye, such as Sjogren's Syndrome, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Crohn's Disease, and Diabetes.

Symptom Checklist

If you have any of the symptoms below, you may have Dry Eye:

- Dry Sensation
- Scratchy, Gritty Feeling
- Burning
- Stinging
- Itching
- Excess Tearing (Watery Eyes)
- Mucous Discharge
- Irritation from Wind or Smoke
- Redness
- Tired Eyes
- Light Sensitivity
- Contact Lens Discomfort
- Contact Lens Solution Sensitivity
- Soreness
- Lid Infections/Sties
- Sensitivity to Eye Drops
- Eyelids Stuck Together at Awakening

Having Eye Surgery?



What You Need to Know About Dry Eye

Questions?
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You May Already Have Dry Eye...

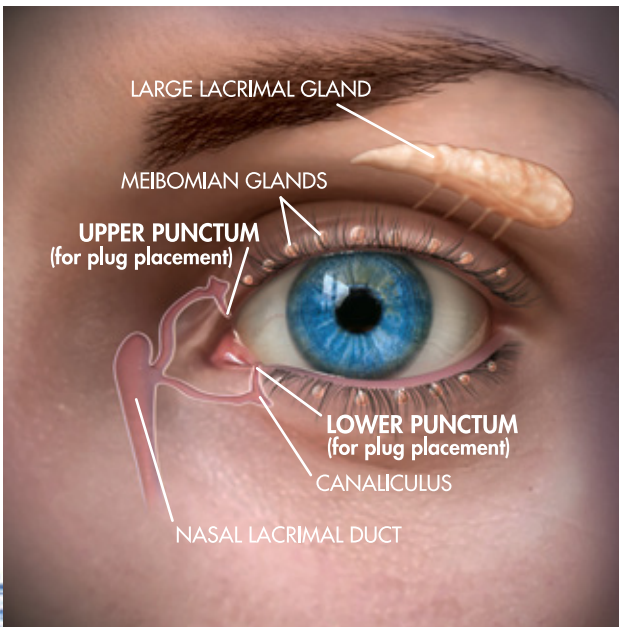
14% of the U.S. population already has dry eye.

About Tears

The human eye is lubricated by two kinds of tears produced by glands in the upper and lower eyelid.

Constant Tears are continuously formed to lubricate the eye and contain natural antibiotics to help fight infections.

Reflex Tears are produced only in response to irritation, injury, or emotion. They help rinse the surface of the eye. A balance is necessary between the two types of tears to ensure that your eyes are comfortable and protected. When constant tear flow is reduced, there is irritation that can cause excessive reflex tearing ("watery eyes"). These excess tears lack the oil needed to keep from evaporating and do not lubricate the eye.



What to Expect After Surgery

Surgical procedures can disrupt the production of tears or the balance between Constant and Reflex tears. This lack of tears, or improper lubrication, results in Dry Eye. Dry Eye sufferers are less likely to achieve their optimal visual acuity and thus may have a greater need for further enhancement.

In this era of technical advances and everchanging surgical procedures, another type of Dry Eye syndrome, Post-surgical Dry Eye, commonly appears almost immediately after refractive surgery. Cataract patients may also suffer from the symptoms after their cataract surgery. The most common surgical procedures affected are:

- LASIK
- Epi-LASIK
- RK
- PRK
- Multifocal Lens Refractive Surgery
- Cataract Surgery

In most cases, unless Dry Eye was present before the surgery, **post-surgical Dry Eye is almost always temporary**, usually lasting only 3 months. In some cases it can last as long as a year after the surgery.

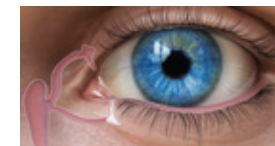
Besides the physical discomfort of Dry Eye caused by compromised tear film, **this condition can affect the quality of your vision** (Visual Acuity). Dry eyes can add visual disturbances and affect near vision with multifocal lenses. **If left untreated, the desired results of your surgery may not be fully achieved.**

Treatment

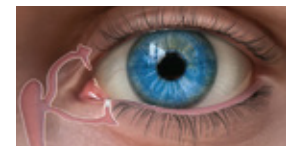
Artificial tears and medications provide a quick, short-term solution to Dry Eye. However, the best solution for recurring Dry Eye may be tear duct closure which allows you to retain your own natural tears.

Temporary closure of the tear duct (punctal canal) is accomplished by inserting a tiny plug (like a sink stopper) to prevent tear drainage. This allows your own tears to bathe your eye for a longer period of time. This dissolvable, temporary plug lasts up to 3 months.

Long-term closure of the tear drainage ducts involves the use of a non-dissolvable, yet removable, plug to seal the tear duct. This non-surgical procedure is painless and takes only a few minutes in your doctor's office.



Intracanalicular Plug



Punctum Plug

Relief

Relief from the discomfort of dry eyes may be immediate for some patients, while for others relief may be more gradual. Artificial tears may be used in conjunction with punctal plugs for severe cases of Dry Eye.

