

# DRY EYE

Dry eye syndrome is a general term that describes the state of the front of the eye in response to a breakdown in the natural layer of tears that coats the front of the eye, called the tear film. When the tear film becomes unhealthy, it breaks down in different places, leading not only to symptoms of irritation, but also to unstable and intermittently changing vision.

Treatment involves consistent management of both the surface of the eye and the eyelids.

Symptoms	Causes	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning</li> <li>• Stinging</li> <li>• Itching</li> <li>• Tearing</li> <li>• Sandy or gritty feeling</li> <li>• Scratchy or foreign-body sensation</li> <li>• Discharge</li> <li>• Frequent blinking</li> <li>• Redness</li> <li>• Blurry or fluctuating vision (made worse when reading, computer, watching television, driving, or playing video games)</li> <li>• Light-sensitivity</li> <li>• Eye pain and/or headache</li> <li>• Heavey eye lids</li> <li>• Eye fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allergies</li> <li>• Decreased hormones</li> <li>• Pregnancy and associated hormonal changes</li> <li>• Thyroid eye conditions</li> <li>• Eyelid inflammation (blepharitis)</li> <li>• Medication/supplement use</li> <li>• Autoimmune disorders</li> <li>• Chemical exposures / injuries to the eyes</li> <li>• Eye surgery</li> <li>• Environmental (dusty, windy, hot/dry)</li> <li>• Contact lens use</li> <li>• Neurologic conditions</li> <li>• Exposure keratitis, in which the eyelids do not close completely during sleep</li> <li>• Post refractive surgery (LASIK or PRK)</li> <li>• Inflammatory eye conditions, including Herpes virus infections and uveitis / iritis</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Vitamin A deficiency (rare in US except in certain diseases such as Crohn's)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Warm Compresses:</b> You can use a warm wet washcloth, a commercial compress product, or even a sock with rice and beans that you put into the microwave for 30 seconds. Replace the sock every month due to the potential for mold over time. A bead mask that you can warm in the microwave works well. You can find these at any pharmacy or department store in the beauty section.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lid Scrubs:</b> Use a drop of baby soap (or other mild cleanser) and dilute it in some warm water. Using a cotton swab scrub at the base of the lashes to remove any debris. Rinse the eyelid with warm water to remove any cleanser residue. Do this twice per day.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lid Massage:</b> After warm compresses gently massage downward from the eyebrow to the upper lash line several times in a sweeping motion. Repeat this process moving upward from the cheek bone to your lower lash line. This helps move the warmed oil in your eyelid onto the surface of your eye. Use caution not to poke yourself.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Artificial Tears:</b> 1 drop in each eye at least four times per day. Put a drop in before near or distance tasks (reading, driving, etc.) Avoid Visine or Similisan. Brands like Systane, Retaine, Refresh, and Thera Tears are recommended but store brand lubricants can be just as effective when used consistently.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Omega 3 Supplement:</b> Sardines, Salmon, Flaxseed Oil, Krill Oil, or Fish Oil</li> </ul>