

# Epiphora

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This material will help you understand epiphora (excessive tearing) and how you can manage it.

## **What is epiphora?**

Epiphora is commonly known as excessive tearing. This happens when your eyes do not drain the tears that you are producing fast enough. The tears then spill out over the edge of your eyelid or from the corners of your eyes. This occurs either from producing too many tears, or because your tears are not draining properly.

## **What causes epiphora?**

Here are some common conditions that could cause excessive tearing:

- Eye infection
- Scratch or cut in the eye
- Blockage in your tear drainage system
- Improper eyelid positions or poor blinking
- Dry eye surface
- Eye irritation from many causes, such as wind or smoke
- Congenital glaucoma (glaucoma that occurs in infants)
- Allergic reactions
- Looking at a computer or reading materials for too long

## **How is epiphora treated?**

Your eye doctor will give you an eye exam to help determine what is causing your excessive tearing. Your treatment will depend on the cause. It may

include artificial tear drops or ointment, allergy eye drops for allergy or antibiotic drops if you have an eye infection.

If your tearing is from reading or working on the computer for many hours, it is best to keep a bottle of artificial tears at your work station and use them 4-6 times per day. When you work at the computer, you don't blink as often as you would when you are not concentrating. Because you are not blinking, the natural oils from your eyelids that lubricate your eye do not get spread around by your eyelids (like a wind-shield wiper). This means your eyes dry out and produce more tears because they are dry.

If you have a blocked tear drainage system or improper eyelid position, you may need surgery to correct your tearing. Your eye doctor will review the best treatment for your condition with you.

**For more information, scan this code with your smartphone or visit the website listed.**



<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003036.htm>

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