

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

What is dry eye?

People with dry eye are not able to produce enough tears to keep the eye healthy and comfortable. Your eye needs to constantly bathe itself in tears to stay moisturized. Your eye produces tears in two ways. It can make tears at a slow, steady rate to maintain normal eye moisture and it can make larger amounts of tears if you are sad or if something gets into the eye. (These kinds of tears do not moisturize the eye.)

What causes dry eye?

Although men and women of all ages can get dry eye, women are most often affected. Women who have gone through menopause are more likely to have dry eye. People who live in dry, dusty, or windy places may also get it. Wearing contact lenses may also lead to dry eye. Some medicines can cause dry eye as well. Be sure to tell your eye doctor about all of the medications you are taking.

What is the treatment for dry eye?

The first step in treating dry eyes is to use artificial tears 4-6 times throughout the day. Artificial tears help to moisturize the eye. If your eyes are still feeling dry after using artificial tears, 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. It may still be blurry when you wake up in the morning.

To clear the vision, use a warm compress on the eyes for five minutes in the morning. A warm compress is just a clean washcloth heated under the hottest water that feels comfortable on your skin. Wring the washcloth out once wet.

Leave the compress on your eyes for 5 minutes. You may need to reheat the washcloth to keep it warm. Then rinse the eyes with a drop of artificial tears.

Artificial teardrops, gels, and ointments are available over the counter. You can see which brand names of drops fall into each of these categories below. This list can help you choose the correct type of eye drops when you are in the store. Taking a fish oil supplement (omega-3s) also helps some people with their dry eye.

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

Tears Naturale Forte Theratears Liquid-Gel	
<u>Oil Based Drops</u> Systane Balance	<u>For Contact Lenses</u> Aquify Comfort Drop Blink Contacts Boston Rewetting (Gas Permeable lenses only) Complete Moisture Plus Clerz Plus All Refresh Products Thera Tears Contact Lens

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



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/dry-eye.cfm>

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