

## DRY EYE

### What is Dry Eye?

Dry eye is a name we use to describe when the tear film of your eye is not working the way that it should. It is a very common problem, affecting many people in the world today. It can cause watery, irritated, gritty eyes and can even feel like you have something in your eye (a foreign body sensation).

### Who can get dry eyes?

Anyone can develop and suffer from dry eyes with varying degrees of severity. Dry eye syndrome is most common in women and becomes more likely as we get older. It can be related to medications, general health conditions, lifestyle and work, diet, contact lens wear and many other aspects of life.

### What is the treatment of Dry Eye?

There may be changes to your lifestyle or work set up that your optometrist can suggest as well as supplements or diet alterations. We may

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inform your GP if we feel a particular medication is affecting your eyes to help them make a decision with you about how to proceed. Most often, symptoms can be significantly reduced with regular use of lubricating eye drops.

What eye drops should I use?

The drop that you will actually use is the right drop for you.

There are **many** dry eye drops that are readily available on the market. Preservative free is best for long term use. Drops can have higher or lower concentrations of 'active ingredients' to help them last longer on the eye. They come in many different shaped bottles and droppers to help with application of the drop. In most cases trying various different drops will allow you to find what works best for you, one which suits your needs and lifestyle and is easy to use. This may be an ointment, gel, drop or spray. In some

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cases, especially severe, you will be prescribed something specific, and this would be discussed between you and your optometrist and/or ophthalmologist.

Will I go blind with Dry Eye?

The majority of dry eye is treatable and does not permanently damage your vision. However, when not managed, dry eye can sometimes cause the cornea (the clear window at the front of your eye) to become damaged. Long term damage to the cornea can leave permanent scarring which may cause compromise your vision. Having regular eye exams and making an appointment if you feel your eyes are not right will help your optometrist look after your eyes.