

Advice for the Treatment of Dry Eye

Dry eye is a common eye condition caused by decreased tear production or increased tear film evaporation. Any abnormality of any one of the three layers of tears (water, mucous and oil) produces an unstable tear film, resulting in symptoms of dry eye. Typical symptoms are dryness, burning and a sandy-gritty eye irritation that gets worse as the day goes on. Symptoms may also be described as itchy, scratchy, stinging or tired eyes. Although it may seem strange, dry eye can cause the eyes to water. This can happen because the eyes are irritated.

Treatment of Dry Eye

1. The improvement of oil drainage by the use of hot compresses
2. The use of lubricating tear drops and ointments to soothe the eyes
3. Drink plenty of water
4. Avoid excessive heating/cooling environments
5. Wear wrap around sunglasses when outdoors
6. Take frequent breaks when using the computer or reading
7. Talk to your GP about omega-3 supplements

How to Apply Hot Compresses

Wet a face flannel with very warm water (without being uncomfortable), wring out the excess, and place the folded flannel over your closed eyelids until it cools down.

How to Apply Tear Drops

Wash your hands. Gently pull the lower lid away from the eyeball with the index finger of one hand and apply one or two drops in the space made between the lid and the eyeball. These drops can be used frequently throughout the day and can be purchased over the counter from Tamborine Mountain Optometrist or your local pharmacy. The best quality unpreserved eye drop is HyloForte – but it is expensive. Cheaper good alternatives are Blink Intensive Tears or Systane Ultra, but these do have preservatives in them.

Important!

Dry eyes can be exacerbated by smoky environments, dust and air conditioning and by our natural tendency to reduce our blink rate when concentrating. Purposefully blinking, especially during computer use or long distance driving, and resting tired eyes are basic steps that can be taken to minimize discomfort.