

# Dry Eye Disease

Patient information leaflet

## Why your eyes feel this way

Dry eye means the tear film is not doing its job. In one form the tear gland produces too little fluid. In the other, far more common, the oil glands in the eyelids are blocked, so tears evaporate within seconds of a blink. Most people have some of both. This is why treatment differs from person to person, and why drops alone often disappoint.

## Why watering can be a sign of dryness

An irritated surface triggers a reflex flood of watery tears. These lack the oily layer needed to stay in place, so they spill over the lid. Watering eyes are therefore often a symptom of dry eye rather than proof against it.

## Why it is common in this region

Low outdoor humidity, continuous air conditioning, airborne dust and long hours at a screen all contribute. Concentrated screen work reduces blink rate by more than half, and the blinks that remain are often incomplete, so the oil glands are not emptied.

## What helps every day

- Use preservative-free lubricating drops on a fixed schedule, not only when symptoms appear. If you use drops more than four times a day, they must be preservative-free.
- Warm compresses and lid massage if the oil glands are involved — see the separate eyelid hygiene leaflet.
- Position your screen slightly below eye level, and take a deliberate pause every twenty minutes with several full, complete blinks.
- Direct car and office air vents away from your face, and consider a humidifier at home.
- Keep well hydrated; consider an omega-3 supplement if advised.

## Treatments available in clinic

Depending on the type and severity: anti-inflammatory drops, a short course of steroid, punctal plugs to retain your own tears, intense pulsed light, thermal pulsation of the oil glands, and — for severe surface disease — drops prepared from your own blood serum.

## What to expect

Dry eye is managed rather than cured. Comfort usually improves before the measurements do, and gland treatments need several weeks of consistency before their benefit appears. Progress is reviewed with the same tests each time so that improvement is measured rather than assumed.

### Contact the clinic if you develop

- Pain rather than discomfort, or marked light sensitivity
- Reduced vision that does not clear on blinking
- A red eye with discharge, particularly if you wear contact lenses

*Reviewed by Dr. Aysun Yucel Gencoglu, MD, FEBO, FICO.*

**Notes for you from today's consultation**