

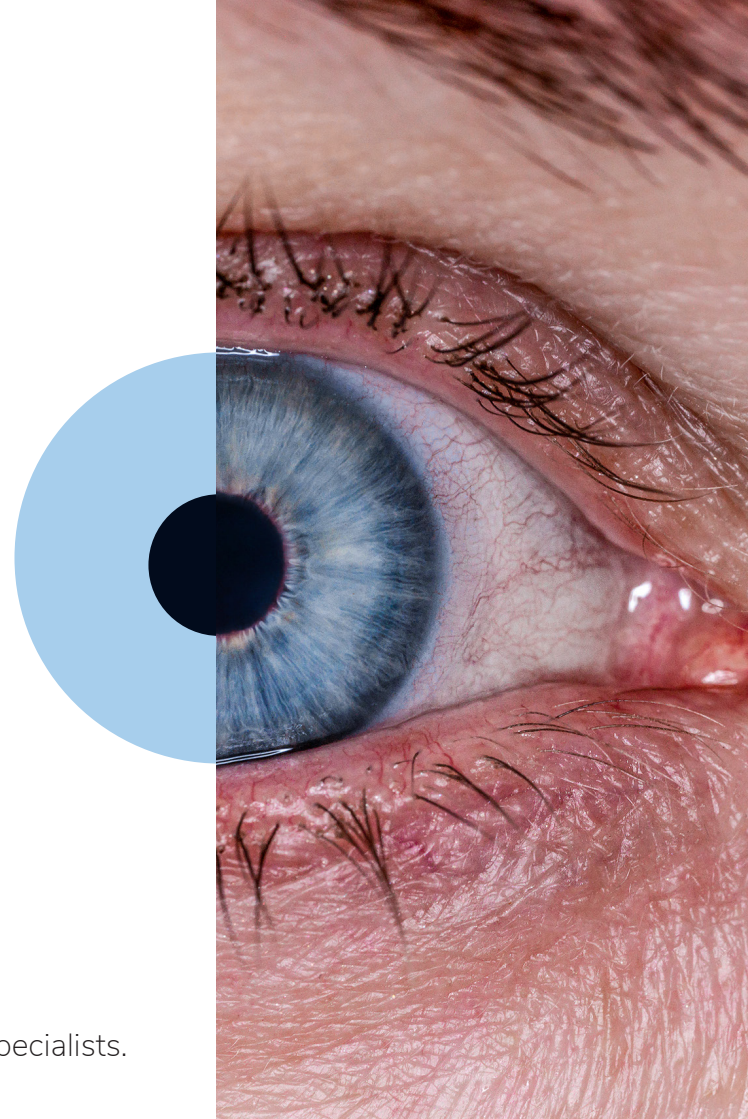


Dry Eye

Patient Information

Information and advice to help you understand and manage your condition.

The information in this leaflet has been developed by Scope Eyecare in collaboration with leading eye care specialists.



Dry Eye Disease

What is Dry Eye?

Dry Eye Disease, or Dry Eye, is a common problem with the tears in your eyes. It happens when you don't make enough tears, or when your tears dry up too fast. Either way, the front of your eye can become dry and feel uncomfortable.

Tears help to keep your eyes feeling smooth, comfortable and clear. If your tears aren't working properly, your eyes might feel dry, sore or gritty. Your eyes may also start to water or run. This might surprise you as you



have 'Dry Eye', but watery eyes are a result of your eye making extra tears when they get irritated, to try to protect themselves.

Dry Eye is often a long-lasting problem. This means it may not go away quickly, and you may need to look after your eyes regularly to keep them feeling comfortable.

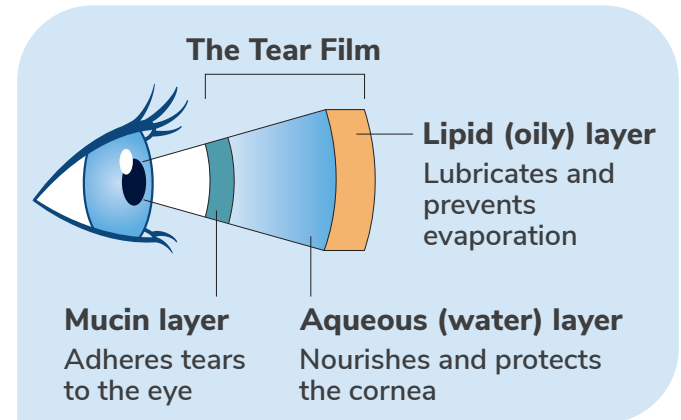
The tear film: your eye's natural moisture layer

The front of your eye is covered by a thin layer of tears called the tear film. Think of it like a smooth, protective coating. For your eyes to feel comfortable, this tear film needs to stay balanced every day. It's made up of three layers:

- **Mucin layer** – the inner layer, closest to your eye. It holds the tears to your eye and helps them spread out evenly.
- **Water layer** – the middle layer, and usually the thickest. It keeps your eye moist, washes away dust, and helps nourish the front of your eye.
- **Oil layer** – the top layer. It stops your tears from drying out too quickly.

Dry Eye happens when something changes in these layers. This makes your tears dry up faster, or makes the front of your eye irritated.

Small oil glands in your eyelids make the oil layer of your tear film. If these glands get blocked, your tears become less stable and your Dry Eye symptoms can get worse.



Common symptoms of Dry Eye Disease



Dryness



Blurry vision that comes and goes between blinks



A gritty or sandy feeling



Tired eyes



Burning or stinging



Eyes that feel worse later in the day



Soreness



Discomfort when reading, driving or using screens



Watery eyes



Contact lenses feeling less comfortable

What causes Dry Eye Disease?

Common causes include:

Lots of things can cause Dry Eye. Some of these you can change, and some you can't.

- Getting older
- Being of Asian background
- Being female
- Spending a lot of time on phones, tablets or computers
- Air conditioning, fans, central heating or dry air
- Windy or smoky places
- Wearing contact lenses
- Not blinking fully or often enough
- Some eye surgeries
- Some medicines, including antihistamines (allergy medicine)
- Changes in hormones
- Problems with your eyelids or the oil glands in them
- Health conditions such as diabetes and Sjögren's Syndrome

What causes Dry Eye Disease?

Two of the biggest causes of Dry Eye are **Blepharitis** and **Meibomian Gland Dysfunction**. Together, these cause around 80% of all Dry Eye cases.

Blepharitis often happens when too much natural bacteria builds up along your eyelid edge and eyelashes.

Meibomian Gland Dysfunction happens when the amount or quality of oil from your eyelid glands changes.

Both of these can make your tears dry up faster and cause irritation on the surface of your eyes.

How to manage Dry Eye Disease

The best way to manage Dry Eye is to deal with what's causing it. This can be different for each person. You'll get the best results by following a regular routine, rather than only treating your eyes now and then. Here are four simple steps you can build into your day.

Step 1: Heat

Place a warm eye mask over your closed eyelids. This softens the oil in your eyelid glands so it can flow more easily. The heat also loosens any flaky debris on your eyelid edge (caused by Blepharitis), making it easier to clean away in Step 2.

- Use a clean, warm eye mask.
- Make sure it feels warm, not hot.
- Wear it for 10 minutes, or as long as your eye care professional tells you to.

- Wash your hands before touching your eyelids.
- After warming, gently massage your eyelids. Roll your finger downwards on your upper eyelid and upwards on your lower eyelid, moving towards your eyelashes. This helps push the softened oil out of the glands.

Step 2: Cleanse

Cleaning your eyelid edge removes extra oil after you've used the warm compress and lid massage. Keeping your eyelids clean also helps the oil glands stay open and can reduce irritation.

- Wash your hands before touching your eyelids.
- Use eyelid cleansing wipes, gel, or another product your eye care professional recommends.
- Gently clean along the base of your eyelashes, on both your upper and lower eyelids.



Step 3: Hydrate

Lubricating eye drops, sprays, gels or ointments make your eyes feel more comfortable and help support your tear film. They can ease dryness, grittiness and burning.

Eye lubricants can help with Blepharitis symptoms too, but it's best to use them alongside the other steps, not on their own.

Eye care professionals recommend preservative-free eye drops and sprays. These can help reduce irritation better than drops that contain preservatives.

- Use your eye drops as advised. Ask your eye care professional how often you should use them.
- Don't share your eye drops with anyone else.
- Once opened, most eye drops should only be used for a certain amount of time. This is usually printed on the bottle. **A helpful tip:** write the date you opened it on the bottle, so you remember when to throw it away and start a new one.
- You might need your drops less often as your eyes improve, but keep using them regularly, as this helps stop your symptoms coming back.

Step 4: Supplement

Eye care professionals may suggest eating a diet rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, as this can help improve the oil quality in your eyelid glands and ease dry eye symptoms. Since it can be hard to get enough Omega-3 from food alone, a supplement can help too.

Choose an Omega-3 supplement that your body can absorb well, and that gives you the right amount based on the evidence. An eye care professional can help you choose the right supplement for you.

Other advice

Sometimes your eye care professional may prescribe medicine or other treatments, depending on what's causing your Dry Eye and how bad it is.

There are also lifestyle changes that can help ease your symptoms:

- Take regular breaks from screens.
- Try to blink fully and often.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Remove eye make-up with a preservative-free make-up remover made for eyes.
- Stay away from direct air from fans, car vents, air conditioning and heaters.
- Keep up your routine, even once your symptoms improve.

When should you get help?

Dry Eye is often a long-lasting condition, but with the right routine, it can usually be well managed. Small daily habits can make a big difference to how comfortable your eyes feel and how well you see.

Contact your eye care professional if your symptoms aren't improving, if your eyes feel more uncomfortable, or if you're not sure which treatment is right for you.

Get urgent help if you have:

- Severe eye pain
- A very red eye
- A sudden change in your vision
- Very painful light sensitivity

This information should not replace advice that your eye care professional or other relevant health professional gives you.

Notes



Email: info@scopeeyecare.com

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