

# DRY EYES

## THE TEAR FILM

### 1 Outer Oily Layer

The first layer of the tear film is oily. It is the lens or optical surface. Light must pass through this outer layer when it first enters the eye.

### 2 Middle Watery Layer

The second layer of the tear film is watery. The watery layer keeps the eye moist and lubricated. It ensures that any foreign debris and particles are flushed away.

### 3 Inner Mucus Layer

The third and final layer of the tear film is the inner mucus layer. The mucus layer ensures that the tear film can adhere to the eye's surface, ensuring a smooth surface for clear vision.

## How are Dry Eyes Treated?

Although you can't cure dry eyes, certain treatments are quite effective in managing them. Artificial tears are where many ophthalmologists begin, either with drops or ointment.

Patients with dryness may also benefit from humidifiers where they spend the most time, like at home or the office. Using side shields on glasses can help as well.

Managing dry eye can be helpful when using eyeglasses treated with coatings that protect your eyes from infrared radiation and ultraviolet rays. These coatings can help manage dry eye since you can use them to protect against blue light emitted from electronic devices like your smartphone, tablet, and computer.

For some patients, temporarily or permanently closing the tear drains can help preserve the natural, moist layer of the tear film. If you have dry eyes that haven't responded well to treatments, you may need to try a combination of treatment options to see success.

## Exciting New Treatment for Dry Eyes

One method of treating dry eyes is with punctal plugs. Punctal plugs, also tear duct plugs or lacrimal plugs, are small medical devices inserted into the tear duct.

They are placed in the tear duct to block them and keep them from draining liquid, which helps keep tears on the surface of the eye for longer before evaporating. Keeping tears in the eye longer can help treat dry eyes. Even after punctal plug insertion, using artificial tears are likely still necessary.

## Why are Tears Important?

Tears are an essential part of how the eyes stay healthy. By blinking, a protective coating of tears spreads, not unlike a film, over the front of the eye. The film has three layers. Each layer has a specific function to ensure the eye functions as it should.

## What are the Symptoms of Dry Eyes?

If you have dry eyes, you may experience a multitude of symptoms. These can include a foreign body sensation in the eye, redness, burning, excess watering or tearing, contact lens intolerance, vision fluctuation, blurriness, and eye fatigue. People with dry eyes may experience one or several symptoms depending on the person and their symptoms.

Regardless of the symptoms you experience, you may notice that they typically worsen as the day progresses. This also is usually true if you're driving in the evening, completing tasks that require focus, reading, working on the computer, or using your television.

Dry eye symptoms may also get worse when you're in environments that are dry, windy, or lack moisture. You may notice your eyes feel dry and irritated if you're at the office or flying on an airplane.

## See the Difference

The doctors at Scott & Christie are experienced in cataract, macular degeneration, flashes and floaters, and glaucoma evaluations.