



How well *do* you see?

About Dry Eye

What is dry eye?

Dry eye results from inadequate wetting and lubrication of the eye. When tear glands stop making enough tears, produce poor-quality tears, or tears evaporate too quickly, dry eye occurs.¹ Dry eye can be caused by a number of factors:

- **Age:** as a natural part of aging, most people 65 and older experience symptoms of dry eye²
- **Gender:** women are more likely to develop dry eye due to hormonal changes, use of oral contraceptives and menopause²
- **Medications:** certain medications can reduce the amount of tears produced, such as antihistamines, decongestants, blood pressure medicines and antidepressants²
- **Medical conditions:** people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and thyroid problems can have a greater risk of dry eye²
- **Environmental conditions:** tear evaporation can be caused by exposure to smoke, wind and dry climates, or failing to blink regularly (for instance, working at a computer for long periods of time)²
- **Other factors:** long-term use of contact lenses can cause dry eye, as can refractive surgeries, such as LASIK²
- **Poor tear quality:** problems within the three layers of tear film (oil, water, mucus) can cause symptoms³
- **Decreased tear production:** the inability to produce enough tears³

What are the symptoms of dry eye?

Common symptoms include:

- Eye fatigue³
- Stinging, burning or scratching sensation³
- A sandy or gritty feeling, as if something is in the eye¹
- Episodes of excess tearing, followed by very dry eye periods¹
- Pain and redness¹
- Difficulty wearing contact lenses³
- Increased irritation from smoke or wind¹
- Sensitivity to light³
- Redness³
- Blurred vision³



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How is dry eye diagnosed and treated?

An eye care professional (ECP) can diagnose dry eye by measuring the volume and/or quality of tears within the eye.³ Treatment for occasional or mild dry eye generally involves over-the-counter eyedrops.² Dry eye can also be a chronic condition, but an ECP can prescribe treatment to keep eyes healthy, more comfortable, and to prevent vision from being affected.²

1. National Eye Institute, Facts about Dry Eye. <http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/dryeye/dryeye.asp> [Accessed August 26, 2014]
2. American Optometric Association, Dry Eye. <http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/eye-and-vision-problems/glossary-of-eye-and-vision-conditions/dry-eye?sso=y> [Accessed June 27, 2014]
3. Mayo Clinic, Diseases and Conditions, Dry Eyes. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dry-eyes/basics/causes/con-20024129?DSECTION=all> [Accessed June 27, 2014]



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