

Facts About Dry Eye

Dry Eye Syndrome (DES)

Dry eye syndrome is a term generally used to describe a group of conditions that result from insufficient tears to lubricate and nourish the eye¹. Nearly 300 million people worldwide² experience dry eye, however it can be difficult to diagnose and can easily be mistaken for other conditions such as infections and allergies. Also, not everyone experiences or describes symptoms in the same way.

- Dry eye is one of the most common reasons patients seek help from their eye doctor³. It has been estimated that 10 to 20 percent of the U.S. population suffers from dry eye.
- Dry eye results from abnormal or insufficient tears, which can lead to eye irritation and ultimately inflammation of the eye. Once inflammation begins, damage can occur to ocular structures, perpetuating and intensifying a cycle of signs, symptoms and causing more inflammation.
- Anyone can experience dry eye, but the condition is more common in females than in males. An estimated 3.2 million women age 50 and over⁴, and 1.68 million men age 50 and over⁵ are affected by dry eye. The occurrence of dry eye increases with age. SERI reports that nearly 75 percent of people over age 65 will experience dry eye syndrome⁶, and the condition occurs most often in older women after menopause⁷.
- Common symptoms of dry eyes may include **dryness, scratchiness, burning or stinging, tired eyes, general discomfort, blurred or variable vision**, sensitivity to light, gritty or Foreign Body Sensation (FBS), contact lens intolerance and tear debris. Occasionally, the dry eye patient may experience a paradoxical excess or “reflex” tearing caused by the underlying eye surface irritation.
- Common causes may include advancing age, allergies, poor diet, heating/cooling environmental circumstances, hormonal changes, health status such as diabetes, arthritis, lupus, thyroid dysfunction, chemotherapy or radiation treatments, and acne rosacea, contact lens use, computer use, and patients that have a history of LASIK surgery. In addition certain medications can contribute to dry eye symptoms such as antidepressants, antihistamines, decongestants, acne treatments, diuretics, and some blood pressure medications.
- Treatment of this condition may include: artificial tears, gels and/or lubricating ointments at bedtime, daily eyelid hygiene wipes, a prescribed medication regimen, omega-3 essential fatty acid nutritional supplements (fish and flaxseed oil), and punctal (tear drainage) occlusion of the eyelid to retain moisture. When dry eye is severe, additional treatment may be used.
- It is important that patients see an eye care professional to determine whether or not they have dry eye and to determine the appropriate therapy for the condition. If all other therapies have not resolved the dry eye symptoms, the eye care professional may then recommend a biologic therapy, such as PROKERA® SLIM.
- Factors that can contribute to dry eye include smoke, pollution, extreme heat or cold, windy environments, concentrated near work such as reading or staring at a computer screen, hormonal changes, autoimmune diseases such as Sjogren’s Syndrome, Lupus or Rheumatoid Arthritis, and certain types of medications including antihistamines, anti-depressants and hormone replacement.
- PROKERA® SLIM is a biologic corneal bandage that is similar to a large contact lens. When placed on the eye, it helps relieve dry eye symptoms and restore the cornea back to a healthy optimal state, as well as improve vision⁸. It is the only FDA cleared therapeutic device that both reduces inflammation and promotes healing. It has been clinically proven to reduce both signs and symptoms of dry eye.
- As you can see the causes and possible treatments are varied and complex. An individual treatment plan will be formulated for you based on severity and known causes. Please follow the eye care professional’s recommendations and treatment plan carefully.

References

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