

## Why do my eyes feel this way?

Nature has provided our eyes with their very own delicately balanced lubrication and protection system. Each time you blink, your tears coat the surface of your eye providing protection and nourishment. If your tear production is decreased, the result is dry, burning, scratchy eyes, a condition known as Dry Eye Syndrome.

Increasingly, your eyes may try to correct the dry condition by reacting to the irritation of dry, gritty eyes by increasing tear production. These tears, known as "reflex tears", do not have the lubrication qualities necessary to properly protect and nourish the eye.

## Do Your Eyes Feel...

- Scratchy?
- Burning?
- Tired?
- Watery?
- Dry?
- Irritated?



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## What is the cause of Dry Eye Syndrome?

Some of the common causes of Dry Eye Syndrome include:

### The Aging Process

Often as we grow older, our eyes begin to produce fewer lubricating tears. Certain conditions associated with arthritis or autoimmune diseases, such as Sjogren's syndrome, are known to dry out the eyes and mouth.

### Contact Lenses

Contact lens wearers often experience eye discomfort due to Dry Eye Syndrome. This may lead to irritation, infection and increased protein deposits. Research has shown that Dry Eye Syndrome is the leading cause of contact lens intolerance.

### Environmental Conditions

Many environmental factors in our lives can cause Dry Eyes. Everything from bright sunny days, to wind, snow, low humidity, air pollution, high altitude, fans and air conditioners can intensify the condition.

### Medications

The use of certain types of medication such as decongestants, antihistamines, oral contraceptives, pain relievers, beta-blockers or alcohol can all cause a decrease in tear production and secretion. Prolonged use of eye drops can also aggravate dry eye conditions.

### LASIK (Laser Correction Surgery)

Following the LASIK procedures, patients often develop Dry Eye Syndrome. Many patients have benefited from temporary punctal occlusion following the LASIK procedure.

## Diagnosing Dry Eye Syndrome

There are several methods your eye care professional can use to determine if you have Dry Eye Syndrome, including:

### Eye Drops

Drops containing a dye are placed in each eye to enable your eye care professional to check for dry areas.

### Schirmer Test

A specially treated strip of paper is placed in the lower eyelid for a 5-minute period. The strip will measure the amount of tears produced, enabling your health care professional to determine if you have Dry Eye Syndrome.

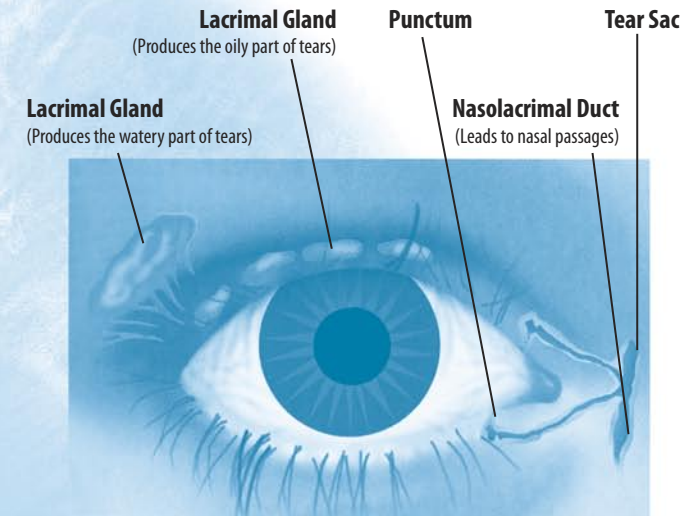
## Artificial Tears are only a Temporary Solution

Patients with less severe symptoms of Dry Eye Syndrome may use artificial tears for short-term relief. Artificial tears do provide initial soothing. However, they can also increase the likelihood of infection by flushing away the natural tear film, which protects the eye.

For this reason, patients with symptoms of Dry Eye may benefit from occlusion of the tear ducts.



## Transparent Front View of the Eye



## Long-Term Tear Duct Closure Using Punctum Plugs Provides Relief

Dry Eye Syndrome can be relieved long-term with a simple non-surgical procedure using Sharpoint® UltraPlug® Punctum Plugs. The use of UltraPlug® Punctum Plugs is popular for a number of reasons. They have a very high success rate, are inserted quickly and painlessly by your eye care professional, and are easily removed, if necessary.

The way they work is simple. Tiny plugs made from soft medical-grade material are inserted into the tear drainage ducts (Punctum) where they block the tears from draining out of your eye. So even though your eye is producing fewer tears than it once did, you again have sufficient tear film to protect and lubricate your eye.

