

Dry Eye

- **What is dry eye?** It is the disruption of healthy tears covering the surface of the eye. This tear film is important not just for eye health reasons but also for clear vision. Dry eye can manifest from either poor quality of tears called evaporative dry eye, decrease in the amount of tears, or both. Dry eye affects as many as 25 million Americans.
- **What Causes dry eye?** There are many things that can lead to or cause dry eyes such as the following:
 - **Environmental factors:** dry climates, blowing AC, smoky environments, travelling in airplanes.
 - **Work and leisure factors:** staring at something for a long period of time, which causes reduced blinking, such as a computer, phone, ipad, or when reading.
 - **Age:** tear production decreases with time, and this usually shows up after the age of 40.
 - **Sex:** woman have changes in hormones, especially during pregnancy and menopause.
 - **Medications:** antihistamines, oral contraceptives, decongestants, blood pressure meds, antidepressants.
 - **Health conditions:** arthritis, thyroid and sjogrens syndrome.
- **What are the symptoms of dry eye?**
 - Stinging / Burning/ Redness of eyes.
 - Scratchiness or the feeling of something in your eye
 - Excess tearing, especially when reading, driving, or watching television
 - Stringy mucus in or around the eyes
 - Difficulty wearing contact lenses
 - Vision that fluctuates during the day and clears after blinking
- **How can I have dry eyes when my eyes are tearing too much?** There are two kinds of tears: those thick tears that properly lubricate the eye and those watery ones that are produced as a response to irritation or emotion. Excess tearing from dry eye may sound like a contraindication, but when your eyes are irritated and dry; your brain signals the eyes to produce more of the watery type tears, therefore causing excess tearing even when your eyes are dry.
- **What is the treatment for dry eye?** Dry eye cannot be cured, but we can prescribe treatment so your eyes remain healthy and your vision is unaffected. Some treatments that we might prescribe include:
 - Blinking more frequently,
 - Increasing humidity at home or work,
 - Using specific artificial tears and using a moisturizing ointment, especially at bedtime.
 - Hot compresses while showering.
 - Fish oil (omega 3) supplements.
 - Small plugs inserted in the corner of the eyes to slow tear drainage.
 - Surgical closure of the drainage ducts.
 - Prescription eye drops for dry eye such as Restasis and/or corticosteroids.

