

DRY EYE



SUFFERING FROM DRY, IRRITATED OR TIRED EYES ?

It could all be caused by dry eyes.

Dry eye disease is on the rise among the young with a study reporting symptoms of DED in 25% of high school students. These symptoms have been linked to the use of digital devices, contact lens wear and refractive laser.¹

FACTS ABOUT DRY EYES

Dry-feeling eyes is a significantly growing health problem worldwide. In medical terms it is referred to as dry eye disease (DED).¹

Dry eye disease has been diagnosed in about 16.4 million adults in the United States alone, with 6 million more experiencing DED symptoms without a formal diagnosis.

This is a total of more than 22 million individuals suffering from dry eye disease* in the US.¹

**Worldwide between 20-50% of people are affected by dry eye disease.¹
Could you be one of them?**



WHAT IS DRY EYE ?

Dry eye happens when your eyes do not make enough tears to stay lubricated, or when your tears do not work correctly. This may make your eyes feel uncomfortable and it may even cause vision problems.²

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DRY EYE ?

Dry eye may result in the following symptoms:

- a scratchy or gritty feeling
- stinging or burning feeling in your eye
- red eyes
- light sensitivity, or blurry vision.²

WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY DRY EYE ?

In short, everyone may be affected by dry eye disease, ranging from young individuals to the elderly.¹

Let us break it down into individuals that may be more prone to dry eye disease due to non-modifiable and modifiable risk factors: ^{1,3}

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors:

- Women (especially over the age of 50 years)
- Older individuals
- Asian race
- Meibomian gland dysfunction: when the meibomian glands do not secrete enough oils into the tears
- Connective tissue diseases e.g. rheumatoid arthritis

Modifiable Risk Factors:

- Computer use
- Contact lens wear
- Hormone replacement therapy
- The environment: pollution, low humidity and sick building syndrome
- Medications: e.g. antihistamines, antidepressants, anxiolytics and isotretinoin.

The list above includes most of the consistent risk factors.



Other probable risk factors

include diabetes, refractive surgery, viral infections and thyroid disease.³

Office workers are also at risk, with studies reporting dry eye symptoms in 30-65% of office workers.¹

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF DRY EYE DISEASE ?

The economic burden and impact of DED on vision, quality of life, work productivity, and the psychological and physical impact of pain are considerable, reduced work productivity.³

DED has a marked negative impact on the physical and psychosomatic well-being of individuals due to :

- Discomfort
- Pain
- Altered visual acuity
- Preventing them from carrying out basic activities of daily living e.g. reading, watching television, driving, and working.¹
- Symptom severity correlates positively with patient-reported depression, anxiety, and stress scores.¹

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR DRY EYE ?

Treatment for dry eye would depend on the cause of the symptoms. There are different types of treatments that can ease your symptoms and help keep your eyes healthy, including:

- Over-the-counter eye applications: the most common treatments for dry eye are types of eye applications that would lubricate the eye and are available in drops, gels and even mists. Be sure to consult your healthcare provider about the best application for you, and avoid drops containing benzalkonium chloride (BAK).^{2,4}
- Lifestyle changes: if something in your life or your environment is causing your dry eye, or making it worse, your doctor may suggest changes to help protect your eyes e.g.:
- Changing certain medications
- Limiting screen time and taking breaks from staring at screens
- Trying to avoid smoke, wind, and air conditioning
- Drinking plenty of water, 8-10 glasses per day
- Getting enough sleep, 7-8 hours per night.²
- Prescription medicines: if your dry eye is more serious, your eye doctor may give you a prescription for specific eye drops.²

Be sure to tell your healthcare professional if you think you may be suffering from dry eye disease.

Please note: this is an education information leaflet only and should not be used for diagnosis. For more information on Dry Eye, consult your healthcare professional.

References:

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3. Stapleton F, Alves M, Bunya VY, et al. TFOS DEWS II Epidemiology Report. The Ocular Surface. 2017;15:334-365.
4. Walsh K, Jones L. The use of preservatives in dry eye drops. Dovepress. 2019;13:1409-1425.

