

A Dry Eye Assessment

“The good news is that after a thorough investigation, most people find that dry eye is relatively easy to manage.”

During a dry eye assessment, we will carefully consider your own symptoms, health history and environment. We will then undertake a specialist examination of your eyes and tears, and once we have determined the causes of your discomfort we will recommend the best way to alleviate your symptoms and ensure that you leave knowing exactly how to treat your particular condition with a bespoke care plan. We will then invite you to return for follow-up appointments to fine tune your treatment.

This is a private fee service and is not covered by the NHS. Ask for a dry eye clinic appointment at reception.

Try this simple indicator test if you think you may suffer from dry eye

1. Stare at the numbers.
2. Gently blink twice and start reading the numbers immediately after the second blink.
3. Avoid blinking for as long as possible.
4. Stop when you feel discomfort or when your vision fogs.
5. If you stop counting before number 10, you may have dry eye.

1 Thousand	2 Thousand	3 Thousand	4 Thousand
5 Thousand	6 Thousand	7 Thousand	8 Thousand
9 Thousand	10 Thousand	11 Thousand	12 Thousand
13 Thousand	14 Thousand	15 Thousand	16 Thousand
17 Thousand	18 Thousand	19 Thousand	20 Thousand



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Dry Eye

Are You Affected By It?



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What is it and who gets it?

The term “dry eye” is self-explanatory - eyes that aren't fresh, moist and comfortable. The problem affects over 40% of the population, but the over 40s and people who wear contact lenses are particularly susceptible.

Dry eye means that your eyes may not be making enough tears, that the tears which are being produced are of poor quality or that the tears that are produced evaporate away faster than they should. The normal function of tears is to keep the surface of the eye wet and lubricated so any shortage of tears or reduction in their quality can produce a gritty, burning sensation of the eyes and can also disturb vision.

Tell-tale signs

Common signs and symptoms include:

Discomfort: your eyes burn, sting, feel gritty or are sensitive to light.

Foreign body sensation: you feel as if you have something in your eye.

Redness: bloodshot eyes always indicate a problem. Sometimes, it's dry eye.

Fatigue: your eyes seem to tire easily, especially when reading, watching television or using a computer.

Watering: it may sound strange but in some cases the problem is tear quality not quantity and it is possible to have very watery eyes that are still drying out.

What causes it?

For some people it is environmental, your eyes can become dry in centrally heated or air-conditioned rooms and on airplanes. Long stretches working at a computer or driving can also dry your eyes because you don't blink as often as normal.

For others it is linked to their general health. Some possible causes include: certain diseases, for example, people with arthritis are more prone to dry eye (Sjogren's Syndrome = arthritis + dry eye + dry mouth); blepharitis (inflammation of the eyelids); hormonal imbalance, especially in women (e.g. menopause); certain types of medications (anti-acne, some beta-blockers, oral contraceptives, antihistamines, diuretics, decongestants, alcohol and anti-depressants). Please note: do not alter or adjust your prescribed medicines without first discussing with your doctor. Your optometrist or doctor can advise of any known links between medicines and dry eye.

For many it's a small change in the chemistry of their tears, for others it is simply ageing. LASIK surgery and the use of drops with preservatives can also cause dry eye. In all cases the causes must be carefully determined in order to safely manage the problem.

If you only have occasional, mild dry eye, the following can help

Give your eyes a rest: Take breaks while reading or working at a computer. Look away from the monitor or book to let your eyes focus on things that are far away and blink.

Environment: Fans or air conditioning vents can send a continuous air current across the surface of your eyes. Combine this with staring at a computer or TV and it's a problem.

Add water: If the air is dry at home or at work, use a humidifier. Drink plenty of water also, to hydrate from the inside out.

Keep it clean: Steer clear of eye irritants, such as heavy pollution or smoke. That includes avoiding smoking (smokers are more likely to have dry eye) or being near people who are smoking.

Give dryness the drop: Lubricant drops called artificial tears work like natural tears to hydrate and restore the health of the eye's surface. Please ask which ones are best for you.

Contact lens wearers who have dry eyes may consider the following strategies

Try contact lenses made specifically for dry-eye sufferers: Certain lens materials are designed to help minimise the symptoms of dry eyes. Our optometrist may recommend their use and knows which lens cleaning and disinfecting solutions are compatible with the type of lenses you are wearing. If you stray from the prescribed solution, your eyes may feel dry and uncomfortable.

Add moisture throughout the day: Re-wetting drops can refresh your eyes throughout the day, even whilst you're wearing your contact lenses.

Clean lenses properly: Follow our optometrist's instructions to care for your lenses. If you need a refresher course, you can find directions on the solution bottle or package insert or better still - ask our optometrist. Clean lenses are less likely to irritate your eyes.