

Columbus Ophthalmology Associates
DRY EYES

What is dry eye?

The tear film is composed of three layers and keeps the cornea and outer surface of the eye moist. The middle portion of the tear film is made up mainly of water and provides the wetness to the surface of the eye. Many people do not produce enough tears to keep the surface of the eye moist and clean. This results in stinging, burning, scratchiness and irritation. Dry eyes make it difficult to wear contact lenses and can reduce vision due to breakdown of the corneal surface. The tear film normally decreases with age and this is especially common in women after menopause. Certain medications, such as decongestants, tranquilizers, drugs used for high blood pressure and antihistamines can further disrupt the tear layer. Some medical conditions such as arthritis and thyroid disorders also increase the likelihood of dry eye.

What treatment is available?

Artificial tears are the first line of therapy for dry eye syndrome. These are available without a prescription and patients should try several different brands to find the one that works best with their body chemistry. The use of the computer decreases the blinking rate which can make the tears evaporate even faster. Therefore, artificial tears should be used more often to replace the tears. Dry air and low humidity, common during the winter months, will make dry eye symptoms worse.

Restasis® is a prescription medication taken twice a day in a drop that has been proven to treat moderate to severe dry eye syndrome. Restasis® helps by reducing inflammation and by helping to increase tear production. This allows the surface of the eye to return to a normal state and reduce the symptoms of itchiness, dryness, blurred vision and sensitivity to light. If you wear contact lenses you need to remove them before taking Restasis® and the contacts can be placed back in the eye in about 15 minutes.

It may take four to six weeks before patients begin to feel some relief after beginning Restasis®. There is a more prolonged effect, however, and you may show continued improvement for up to six months after beginning this medication. Patients can continue to use artificial tears in-between Restasis® drops, especially when using a computer or during the dry, winter months.

5155 Bradenton Avenue, Suite 200
Dublin, Ohio 43017

5965 East Broad Street, Suite 480
Columbus, Ohio 43213

(614) 766-2006
www.coavision.com