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DRY EYES

Dry eyes may feel dry, hot, sandy, gritty or even teary or can blur your vision. Dry climate, allergies, contact lens, smoke or pollution can aggravate dry eyes. As we age, our eyes do not make as many tears. Diseases such as Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, and Sjogren's Syndrome, and some medications also cause dry eyes. Whatever the cause of your dry eyes, it is important to work with your doctor to find ways to decrease any discomfort.

What Should I Do For Dry Eyes:

- Use artificial tears at least 4 times a day (Systane, Refresh, Genteel) PRESERVATIVE FREE preferred.
- Try a lubricating ointment or gel at bedtime. Lubricants are thicker and last longer but can blur vision temporarily. (Lacrilube, Refresh PM, Genteel gel)
- Try flax seed oil-1000 mg/day by mouth. Try omega three supplements daily such as fish oil.
- Take breaks often when you read, watch television or use a computer. Close your eyes. Do not rub your eyes. Artificial tears may help you when you are doing these activities.
- Avoid smoke, ceiling fans and other eye irritants.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Use wraparound sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun, wind and grit.
- Use a humidifier at home to increase the moisture in the air, especially in the bedroom at night.
- If you usually wear contacts, use rewetting drops or wear your glasses until your eyes feel better.
- Take your medications exactly as prescribed. Do not stop or change the medication without talking to your doctor first.

How to Put In Eye Drops or Ointment:

- For drops, tilt the head back and pull the lower eyelid down with one finger. Drop the medicine inside the lower lid or towards the inner corner of the eye.
- For ointment, pull down on the lower lid with one finger and squirt a small amount along the inside of the lid.
- Close the eye for about 10 seconds to let the medicine move around.
- Be sure the dropper or bottle tip is clean and does not touch the eye, eyelid, lashes, or any surface.
- Put a warm, moist compress on your eyelids every morning for about 5 minutes while washing your face or in the shower. Afterwards, massage your eyelids lightly. This helps increase the natural lubrication of your eyes.

When to seek help?

- Your eyes remain dry, irritated or teary and artificial tears do not help.
- Your eye doctor may recommend further treatments, such as prescription medication such as Restasis, Ilast, autologous tears, plugging your tear drains etc.
- For dry eyes from weakness of your eyelid muscles or trouble closing your eyelids at night, there is a moisture chamber goggle from Tranquileyes.com that may provide some relief.
- An eyelid surgeon may be needed to help you close your eyes or tear ducts with surgery.