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tel +27 21 558 4696 : fax 086 678 5318 : [www.nhoptometrist.co.za](http://www.nhoptometrist.co.za)

## Dry Eye Syndrome

Dry eye syndrome is a chronic lack of sufficient lubrication and moisture on the surface of the eye.

### Symptoms

Persistent dryness, scratchiness and a burning sensation in your eyes are symptoms of dry eyes.

Another symptom of dry eyes is a "foreign body sensation," the feeling that something is in the eye.

And it may seem odd, but dry eye syndrome can cause watery eyes. This is because dryness on the eye's surface sometimes will overstimulate production of the watery component of your tears as a protective mechanism.

### What Causes Dry Eyes?

Tears bathe the eye, washing out dust and debris and keeping the eye moist. They also contain enzymes that neutralize the microorganisms that colonize the eye. Tears are essential for good eye health.

In dry eye syndrome, the lacrimal gland or associated glands near the eye do not produce enough tears, or the tears have a chemical composition that causes them to evaporate too quickly.

Dry eye syndrome has several causes:

- it occurs as a part of the natural aging process, especially during menopause
- as a side effect of many medications,
- or because you live in a dry, dusty or windy climate.
- if your home or office has air conditioning, that too can dry out your eyes.
- another cause is insufficient blinking, such as when you're staring at a computer screen all day.
- dry eyes also are a symptom of certain systemic diseases;
- long-term contact lens wear is another cause;
- Incomplete closure of the eyelids, eyelid disease and a deficiency of the tear-producing glands are other causes.

#### Reference:

The College of Optometrists, the professional, scientific and examining body for optometry in the UK. People who are our members agree to meet the highest clinical and ethical standards. Look for the letters MCOptom to see if your optometrist is a member.



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## Treatment for Dry Eyes

Dry eye syndrome is an ongoing condition that may not be completely curable (depending on the cause). But the accompanying dryness, scratchiness and burning can be managed.

### 1. Artificial Tears

Your eye care practitioner may prescribe preservative free artificial tears, which are lubricating eye drops that may alleviate the dry, scratchy feeling. Preservative free artificial tears help dry eyes feel better.

Check with your eye care practitioner before buying any over-the-counter eye drops. It will probably save you a lot of money, because he or she will know which formulas are effective and long-lasting and which ones are not, as well as which eye drops will work with your contact lenses.

### 2. Sunglasses

Sunglasses can help with dry eyes because they help protect the eye from wind, pollen and dust.

### 3. Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Salmon is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which may reduce your risk for dry eyes. Sardine, herring and cod liver oils are even better, or try a supplement. Studies have found that supplements containing omega 3 fatty acids can decrease dry eye symptoms

### 4. Humidifier

Indoors, an air cleaner can filter out dust and other particles from the air, while a humidifier adds moisture to air that's too dry because of air conditioning or heating.

### 5. Drinking more water can help, too.

Mild dehydration often makes dry eye problems worse. This is especially true during hot, dry and windy weather. Simply drinking more water sometimes reduces the symptoms of dry eye syndrome.

#### Reference:

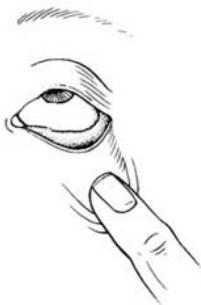
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## How to Put Eye Drops in Your Eyes

There are many ways to put drops into your eyes. No one likes to have the drop actually hit the eye ball. Probably the easiest way to do it yourself is to stand in front of a mirror and follow the diagram below. If you have someone to help you they can follow the same basic technique.



### Step 1

Stand in front of a mirror and pull down lower eyelid. This will form a "bowl" on the inside of the eyelid.



### Step 2

Place an eye drop into the bowl that was formed on the inside of eyelid. Then just let the eyelid go and the drop will spread around.



### Step 3

You can place your finger tip on the nose side of the eyelid and hold a little pressure for a few minutes. This keeps the medicine around your eye longer and blocks it from draining into your nose



### Step 4

You can wipe away any excess and tears. You're all done!

Reference:

Brems.2005.Brems Eye Centre. [Online]. Available: <http://bremseyecenter.com> [26 June 2011].

Lee, J & Bailye, G.Dry Eye Syndrome [Online]. Available: <http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/dryeye.htm> [26 June 2011].

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