

Dry Eye Patient Information

What is dry eye?

Dry eye happens when your eyes do not make enough tears (a QUANTITY problem) or when your tears don't work correctly to adequately lubricate your eye (a QUALITY problem). This can make your eyes feel uncomfortable, and in some cases, it can also cause vision issues.

Dry eye is common — it affects over 16 million Americans. The good news is that if you have dry eye, you have treatment options to keep your eyes healthy and more comfortable.

What are the symptoms of dry eye?

- A scratchy feeling, like there is something in your eye
- Stinging or burning feelings in your eye
- Red eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Blurry or fluctuating vision
- Watery eyes (watering is a common symptom of poor tear film quality)

Anyone can get dry eye, but you might be more likely to have dry eye if you:

- Are age 50 or older
- Are female
- Wear contact lenses
- Have certain autoimmune conditions, like lupus or Sjögren syndrome
- Have a skin condition like ocular rosacea

Treating Dry Eye

The most important thing for patients to know is that dry eye is CHRONIC and PROGRESSIVE. There is currently no cure for dry eye. Treatment is directed at reducing symptoms and improving quality of life. Dry eye is a MEDICAL condition and is evaluated and treated under your MEDICAL insurance, not your VISION insurance. It is important to diagnose and treat dry eye, as left untreated it can cause irreversible damage to the oil-producing glands in the eyelids.

There are several things that patients can do to improve dry eye:

- Drink more water to keep the body hydrated
- Avoid air blowing directly at their eye (ceiling fans or air vents in cars) as this increases evaporation of tears
- Nearly all dry eye patients benefit from a nutritional supplement that includes omega 3s and natural anti-inflammatories. Be aware of medications that can decrease tear production (oral antihistamines are a common one) and limit their use if possible.
- Take frequent breaks when looking at computers/digital screens as we blink less when staring at digital screens

If additional treatment is needed, our office can prescribe additional home treatments or in-office procedures to improve dry eye symptoms. Artificial tears can help with comfort but are a short-term, palliative treatment. Additional treatment can be effective at treating the underlying issues causing dry eye. Be sure to discuss your symptoms with our doctors. In some cases, we will schedule you for a medical office visit to further evaluate your dry eye and prescribe the best treatment for you. The questionnaire on the reverse side can help assess dry eye symptoms. A score >6 indicates dry eye.

Cary Family Eye Care offers effective in-office treatments for dry eye including the Lumenis IPL (intense pulsed light) and iLux Thermal Pulsation System. We also offer punctal plug treatment to preserve tear volume and multiple at-home treatments. If you are suffering with dry eye symptoms let us know so we can schedule a thorough evaluation and help reduce your symptoms.

DRY EYE QUESTIONNAIRE (DEQ-5)

1. Questions about **EYE DISCOMFORT**:

a. During a typical day in the past month, **how often** did your eyes feel discomfort?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	CONSTANTLY
0	1	2	3	4

b. When your eyes felt discomfort, **how intense was this feeling of discomfort** at the end of the day, within two hours of going to bed?

NEVER HAVE IT	NOT AT ALL INTENSE				VERY INTENSE
0	1	2	3	4	5

2. Questions about **EYE DRYNESS**:

a. During a typical day in the past month, **how often** did your eyes feel dry?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	CONSTANTLY
0	1	2	3	4

b. When your eyes felt dry, **how intense was this feeling of dryness** at the end of the day, within two hours of going to bed?

NEVER HAVE IT	NOT AT ALL INTENSE				VERY INTENSE
0	1	2	3	4	5

3. Question about **WATERY EYES**:

a. During a typical day in the past month, **how often** did your eyes look or feel excessively watery?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	CONSTANTLY
0	1	2	3	4

SCORE:

1a	+	1b	+	2a	+	2b	+	3	=	TOTAL