DRY EYES AND HOW TO SOOTHE THEM

Dry, itchy eyes are an annoying distraction from your everyday life. What causes them? Many factors, but they all basically boil down to one thing—your tears.

When your eyes aren’t producing enough tears, or your tears don’t have the correct chemical composition, it’s going to cause dry eyes. That’s because in order for your eyes to remain healthy, you need to continuously produce a fresh layer of tears.

Some common causes of dry eyes include:
• Environmental factors, such as dry air from heating or air conditioning, or even a long flight in an airplane without enough air circulation
• Reduced blinking and eye strain from close-up work, such as on a computer
• Prescription drugs, especially antihistamines, diuretics and anti-anxiety pills
• Hormonal changes that alter the production of a normal tear film

Contact lenses don’t cause dry eyes, but ill-fitting lenses can increase your discomfort.

What you can do about your dry eyes
Many cases of dry eyes can be solved with simple at-home or over-the-counter treatments, as recommended by the Mayo Clinic.

Wash your eyes
If you have a condition that causes inflammation of the eyes, it might help to wash your eyes. Run a clean washcloth under warm water and gently rub your eyes. Try using a gentle soap, massaging your fingertips into the corner of your eyelids, then rinse the soap away completely. This may help loosen any debris.

**Use artificial tears or eyedrops**
For some people, using an over-the-counter eye lubricating solution may eliminate dry eyes altogether. These products are designed to restore your tears when you blink.

**Add supplements**
Research has shown that taking omega-3 supplements or increasing omega-3 in your diet (e.g., by eating tuna) may support normal tear production, helping to alleviate dry eye symptoms.

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**Change your work habits**
If you spend most of your day at a computer, try to look away from your screen a few times each hour and remember to blink while working. Be sure to remain hydrated as dehydration can worsen the symptoms of dry eyes.

**See a doctor**
If the above simple measures don’t work, it’s time to get in touch with your doctor for further help.


Information provided is for general background purposes and is not intended as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment by a trained professional. You should always consult your physician about any healthcare questions you may have, especially before trying a new medication, diet, fitness program, or approach to healthcare issues.