

# Dry Eye Disease

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There are nearly 30 million people in the United States and over 300 million worldwide who have been diagnosed with dry eye disease. Most of these patients have learned to live with eye discomfort and have become dependent on remedies that only provide temporary relief.

At Associated Eye Care, we take pride in helping patients improve their dry eye disease. With advanced diagnostic testing designed to determine the root cause of your dry eye symptoms, our team of specialists are able to accurately determine your personalized treatment plan.

Dry eye syndrome is a common condition in which there is a deficiency in the quality and/or quantity of tears produced by the eyes. Tears perform many important functions for the eye including cleaning, lubricating, and providing nutrition. Tears also maintain a smooth surface on the eye to refract light and to provide clear vision. A healthy tear film contains a very complex balance of water, salts, mucin, and oils produced by glands on the eye and eyelids. If any of these components are out of balance, dry eye symptoms can occur.

Typical symptoms of dry eye include a dry or gritty sensation, scratchiness, itching, burning, pain, eyelid heaviness, intermittent blurred vision, and intermittent tearing. Symptoms are usually worse later in the day, during prolonged use of the eyes, and in conditions of heat, wind and low humidity.

Surprisingly, many patients with dry eyes complain of watery eyes. Normally the lids produce a small amount of tears to keep the eyes lubricated and healthy. If these normal tears are of poor quality or insufficient quantity to keep the eyes healthy,

a message is sent to the brain to release a reflex flow of tears. This reflex tearing results in a large volume of watery tears in hopes of flushing out whatever irritated the eyes. This large rush of tears either accumulates on the eyelid or runs down the cheek. These symptoms may seem counterintuitive, but to prevent the eye from watering, one must treat the dryness that triggers it.

The outermost layer of the tear film, the lipid layer, is composed of oils produced by meibomian glands that are located on the inside of the eyelids. The oils from these glands lubricate and prevent evaporation of the tear film. Approximately 85% of patients diagnosed with dry eye have symptoms associated with an unstable tear film due to meibomian gland disease or dysfunction.

LipiFlow is a revolutionary in-office treatment that is now available to patients who suffer from dry eye disease associated with meibomian gland dysfunction. With just a single treatment, LipiFlow can provide relief for up to one year. LipiFlow works by delivering controlled heat to the inside of the eyelid while also exerting gentle pressure to remove thick, congested oils from blocked meibomian glands. It treats both upper and lower eyelids at the same time, without causing damage to other delicate tissues and structures within the eye. The treatment takes only 12 minutes and is pain free. By unblocking the glands with this revolutionary thermal pulsation technology, the body can resume its natural production of oil and keep the eyes lubricated.

## ***What should you do if you have a patient who may benefit from Dry Eye Treatment***

We are pleased to offer Dry Eye treatment at Associated Eye Care. A Dry Eye evaluation is required to assess candidacy for the treatment and can be scheduled by calling 651-275-3000.

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*The information provided here is for purposes of general education. It is not intended as medical advice for specific recipients of this article.*