

Dry Eye

What is the tear film?

The tear film consists of three layers:

- An oily layer forms the outermost surface of the tear film, smoothing the tear surface and reducing evaporation of tears.
- A watery middle layer cleans the eye, removing foreign particles or irritants.
- An inner layer of mucus allows the watery layer to spread evenly over the surface of the eye and helps the eye remain moist.

Why are tears important to eye health?

A healthy tear film makes the surface of the eye smooth and clear. Without an adequate tear film, sharp vision is not possible.

What is dry eye?

Dry eye occurs when the eye does not produce enough tears or appropriate

quality of tears to keep the eye healthy and comfortable. Symptoms of dry eye include stinging or burning, scratchiness, stringy mucus in or around the eye, excess irritation from wind or smoke, excess tearing, difficulty wearing contacts, and momentary or persistent blurring of vision that may fluctuate with each blink.

What causes dry eye?

Dry eye can be caused by age, prescription and over-the-counter medications, and certain eyelid problems and rare diseases. It is more common in women than in men.

How is dry eye diagnosed?

The Schirmer tear test and diagnostic drop test are used to diagnose dry eye.

What are the treatment options for dry eye?

Treatment options include artificial tears, conserving tears, preventing evaporation, and prescription medications, such as cyclosporine and steroid eyedrops.