



醫院管理局

HOSPITAL  
AUTHORITY

## Dry Eye

Dry eye is a condition of insufficient tears to lubricate and nourish the eye.

### Tears

The functions of tears are to cleanse, lubricate, provide nutrients, protect the surface of the cornea and facilitate even passage of light for good vision.

Tears are composed of three layers. The innermost mucous layer is secreted by the conjunctiva to allow adherence of the aqueous layer to the surface of the cornea. The middle aqueous layer, of which 90% is water, is secreted by the lacrimal gland. This layer contains oxygen, protein, lysozyme, antibody etc., to cleanse, kill germs and provide nutrients to the cornea and conjunctiva. The outermost lipid layer is secreted by the meibomian glands of the eyelids to reduce evaporation of tear film and allow spreading of the tear film.

### Causes

Dry eye can be due to insufficient tear production or excessive evaporation. Tear film therefore cannot evenly distribute over the cornea surface and lead to dryness and irritations. Patient may sometimes complain of tearing due to reactive changes stimulated by dryness of the eye.

## **Signs/Symptoms**

- Eye redness
- Foreign body sensation
- Eye stinging or burning
- Watery eyes
- Photophobia
- Blurred vision

## **Treatment**

The treatment for dry eye depends on the cause and severity. For minor cases, artificial lubricating eye drops or ointment and regular lid hygiene may suffice. For severe cases, patients might need anti-inflammatory medications, minor surgery to block lacrimal outflow so as to slow down tears drainage or even coverage of the ocular surface to prevent damage to the ocular surface.

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*The information is for general education purpose and reference only.  
Should you have any queries, please consult medical professionals*

**Specialty Advisory Group ( Ophthalmology )**

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