

# Dry Eye Symptoms

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Dry Eye Expert

Dry eye is a common chronic symptom that affects millions worldwide, particularly older adults. It can be associated with certain medications, environmental factors, or systemic conditions. Dry eyes can also occur if you spend most of your time looking at screens, such as your computer, tablet or smart phone.

Dry eyes can occur when your eyes are not producing enough tears to properly lubricate the eye. Tears are necessary to maintain the health of the front surface of your eye called the cornea, which will allow for clear vision. An insufficient supply of tears can cause a disruption to this area and may induce fluctuation in vision. Usually, with each blink, tears spread across the front surface of the eyes (cornea) to maintain lubrication.

This helps to reduce the risk of eye infections by washing away any foreign matter in the eye and keeping the surface of the eye smooth and clear. Glands above your eyes produce these tears to keep your eyes moist, while any excess tears drain into small ducts in the corners of your eyes. However, if these glands are not functioning properly, or if there is an imbalance in tear production and drainage, it can cause dry eye symptoms. Your glands may not be making enough tears, the tears may be drying up too quickly, or poor tear quality don't function well enough to keep the eyes lubricated.

Dry eyes can present with burning, dry or scratching sensation, irritation, blurry vision, sensitivity to light, stringy mucus near the eyes, or red eyes. In some cases, dry eyes can lead to additional vision problems.



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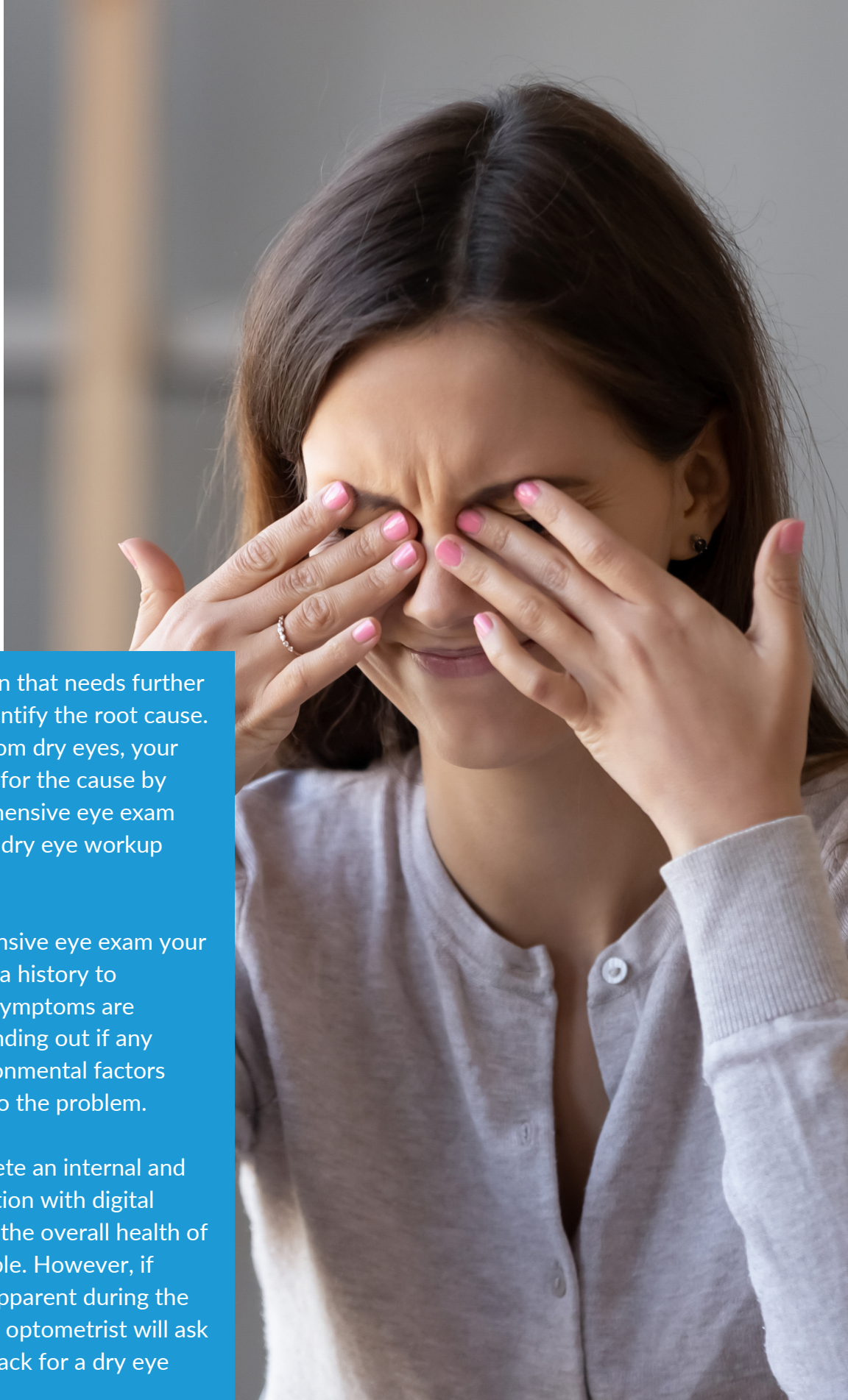


Dry eyes can affect anyone, but there are certain factors that may put you at a higher risk for dry eye. Your risk of dry eye increases if you are:

- Age 50+
- Female
- A contact lens wearer
- Vitamin A deficient or not consuming enough omega-3 fatty acids
- Taking certain medications such as antihistamines, antidepressants, or blood pressure medications
- Exposed to environmental factors such as smoke, dry climates, or excess screen time
- Suffering from a medical condition such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid issues, or an autoimmune condition, such as lupus



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Dry Eyes is a condition that needs further diagnostic tests to identify the root cause. If you are suffering from dry eyes, your eye doctor can check for the cause by performing a comprehensive eye exam along with a separate dry eye workup appointment.

During the comprehensive eye exam your Optometrist will take a history to determine if dry eye symptoms are evident, along with finding out if any medications, or environmental factors may be contributing to the problem.

Next, they will complete an internal and external eye examination with digital imaging to make sure the overall health of the eye is unremarkable. However, if signs of dryness are apparent during the examination, then the optometrist will ask the patient to come back for a dry eye assessment.

The reason for this is to ensure that the ocular surface has not been interfered with during their eye exam because if it has been then it can lead to inaccurate measurements from diagnostics tools used during the dry eye assessment.



**Watch Our Video:  
Are Your Eyes Producing Enough Tears?**



**Watch Our Video:  
Dry Eye Symptoms**

*On the day of the dry eye assessment, your optometrist will do the following:*

- Have you fill out a Dry Eye Symptom Questionnaire
- Perform Osmolarity Testing,
- Perform MMP-9 Testing (InFlammaDry)
- Perform Meibography Imaging
- Perform a Slit Lamp Examination with certain dyes and stripes to assess the lid structure, blink dynamics, tear composition, and evaluate your cornea along with other ocular structures.

After these tests have been completed, your Optometrist will be able to formulate a proper diagnosis for dry eye disease along with a treatment plan.

Depending on the cause of your dry eyes, treatment options will differ. You may be prescribed eye drops or artificial tears, medicines, tear duct plugs, scleral lenses, amniotic membrane transplants, or treatment procedures from specific devices. If it is determined that your dry eyes are due to environmental factors, it may be suggested that you make lifestyle changes such as using a humidifier, limiting screen time, or wearing wraparound sunglasses when outdoors. Your eye doctor will assess your condition and recommend the correct course of treatment for your circumstances.

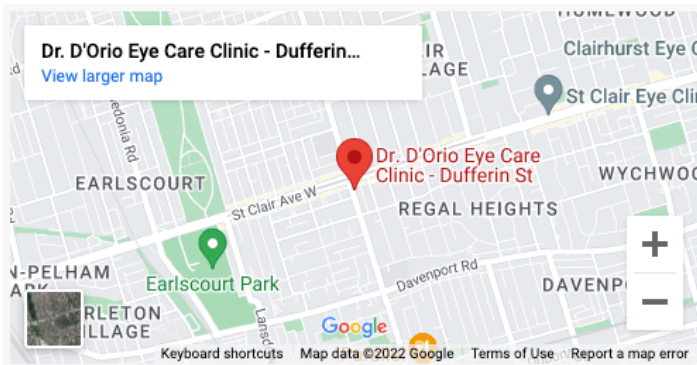
If you are experiencing dry eyes, visit your optometrist for a checkup. While it may just seem like an irritant, if left untreated dry eyes can sometimes damage your cornea or contribute to additional vision problems. For more information about dry eyes, please visit our dry eye landing page and take the survey to see if you are a dry eye treatment candidate.





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