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Dry eyes – what to do when they burn and get itchy?

Dry eyes are a common reason for people to go to an ophthalmologist.

[Dry eyes: how does it happen?](#)[How is our eye moistened?](#)[Prevention can help](#)

Dry eyes are unpleasant and can be painful. A possible cause is a problem with the eye's natural moisture, i.e. that the body does not produce sufficient tear fluid. This can be triggered by environmental factors, illness, or medicines and an ophthalmologist can always help.

It burns, it itches, and it feels like tiny grains of sand are scraping over your pupils. More and more people suffer from dry eyes. The problem is a topic of intense discussion in blogs and forums. Many people don't know much about this eye condition, so it's about time for some information.

Dry eyes or "eye moisture disturbance", how does it happen?





Dry eyes can be caused by many things, including environmental factors such as very bright sunlight, acrid exhaust fumes, airborne pollen and dust, or working at a computer monitor.

> [Convertible drivers and cyclists](#) are also often affected because of the wind blowing against them. You may also encounter causes of dry eyes on holiday, as most swimming pools in holiday areas have high chlorine content and irritate the eye's sensitive conjunctiva.

However, dry eyes can also be caused by > [medicines](#) such as antidepressants or beta blockers. Also, women going through menopause are very frequently affected, because hormonal changes can cause their tear fluid to dry up.

And last but not least, improperly treated vision problems can also be a cause of dry eyes, since the eyes are more easily overstrained. Regular vision checks from an optician or an eye care professional can quickly provide clarity.

How is our eye moistened?

To better understand what happens to > [your eyes](#), it is worth understanding first how the eye works. Tear fluid is secreted by the tear ducts and contains common salt, glucose and protein. It is spread evenly over the eyes with every blink of your eyelids and produces a thin tear film. This film has several tasks: it rinses out foreign particles and serves as a lubricant to ensure that your eyelids glide over your eyes. In addition, tear fluid ensures that the cornea is evenly moistened and supplies your eyes with oxygen and nutritional substances.

There are two potential reasons why the eyes may be incompletely covered with the tear film: either the tear ducts are not producing enough fluid, or the composition of the tear fluid is disturbed. Although the concept of "dry eyes" is well-known and commonly used, today doctors speak of an eye moisture disturbance.

For both forms of the problem, so-called "artificial tears" from a chemist provide the best solution. Artificial tears come in the form of drops or gel and are intended to work as a replacement for tears. They are either dribbled into the lower conjunctival sac or carefully rubbed in. Then you close your eyes and roll them in order to evenly distribute the active substances. But be careful: using them for a long period of time or very frequently can cause your eyes to produce less tear fluid. For this reason it is very important to speak with an ophthalmologist about the possible causes of your condition and if possible to remedy them.

If a local treatment does not help, then as a last resort there is always the option of a small operation.

Prevention can help

Additionally, every person can do things to protect their eyes. It is important that you make sure you have enough light when reading, but avoid bright or glaring light. Do not make the computer screen too bright and relax your eyes for a few moments after 45 minutes. When exposed to the wind or glaring sunlight, make sure to wear high-quality spectacles or > [sunglasses](#) in order to protect your eyes.



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