

## An Inside Look at Dry Eye

Three very thin layers make up the healthy tear film that coats and protects the eye. There is an oily layer, a watery layer, and a mucous layer. The outermost oily layer helps to prevent evaporation of the middle watery layer. The watery layer is spread evenly across the front of the eye by the innermost mucous layer. When tears lack any of these components or when too few are produced, the tear film breaks down.

*Tear drainage system.*



This breakdown results in dry spots in the cornea, causing the symptoms associated with Dry Eye Syndrome—grittiness, burning, itchiness and general discomfort of the eye.

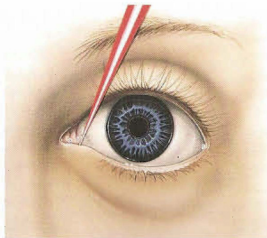
## Treating the Syndrome

Various types of treatment are available to relieve the symptoms associated with Dry Eye. Artificial tear solutions are usually recommended for individuals with mild to moderate cases. Many different brands are available and can be purchased without a prescription.

The small openings located on the upper and lower eyelid margins near the nose are called the puncta and serve to drain tears. Before recommending long-term punctal closure, we will perform a Punctal Occlusion Therapy Test. This simulates eventual treatment to help you decide if it is appropriate for you.

More severe cases of Dry Eye Syndrome may warrant a long-term punctal closure solution. This solution, whether punctal plugs or punctal closure, can alleviate pain and dryness by sealing the tear drainage system in the eye. This causes natural tears to remain in the eye longer, reducing irritation and discomfort.

*Punctal closure for dry eye syndrome*



## Watch Out for These Conditions

Dry Eye Syndrome may be caused by any number of factors, including the natural aging process, allergies, vitamin A deficiency, or drugs and medications such as antihistamines, decongestants, and diuretics.

Your environment can also affect the moisture of eyes. You can help your eyes by avoiding air-conditioned rooms, hot air vents, pollutants (cigarette smoke, oven cleaners, and other harsh chemicals), and by using a humidifier. Protect your eyes from sun, wind, and swirling debris.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms associated with Dry Eye Syndrome, we recommend you have an eye examination.

If you have any questions, call: