



An Eye-opener on Dry Eye

Suffering from redness, burning, tearing and a feeling of sand in your eyes? Are your eyes sore and sensitive to light?

You may have a condition called Dry Eye. ^{1,2,3,4} It sounds trivial but in fact Dry Eye can significantly affect your everyday life, causing distress and interfering with essential tasks such as using your computer, watching television, reading and driving. ^{2,3} Dry Eye, a condition in which you either do not produce enough tears or your tears are of a poor quality, is one of the most common eye conditions worldwide. ^{1,3,5,6} Tears are needed to provide clear vision and maintain a healthy ocular surface. Every time we blink, tears spread across the front surface of the eye (cornea), providing lubrication. Tears wash away foreign particles, keeping the surface of the eyes smooth and clear. ^{5,6}

Here are some interesting facts about Dry Eye:

Research shows that one hour of smartphone or tablet use can increase eye strain and blur fivefold. ⁷ When you stare at a computer screen for long periods of time, you don't blink regularly which leads to drying of the eyes. ^{5,6}

Where you work can increase your risk of Dry Eye. If you are regularly exposed to smoke, wind and a dry climate, your tears evaporate resulting in eye discomfort. ^{4,5} Office environments often have low humidity, ventilation fans, air conditioning and airborne dust/toner particles, not a good recipe for Dry Eye! ⁸

Wearing contact lenses is another big risk factor. ⁹ Add eye cosmetics, cleansers and removal products into the mix, and you are more at risk as these products may cause temporary changes to our tears. ¹⁰



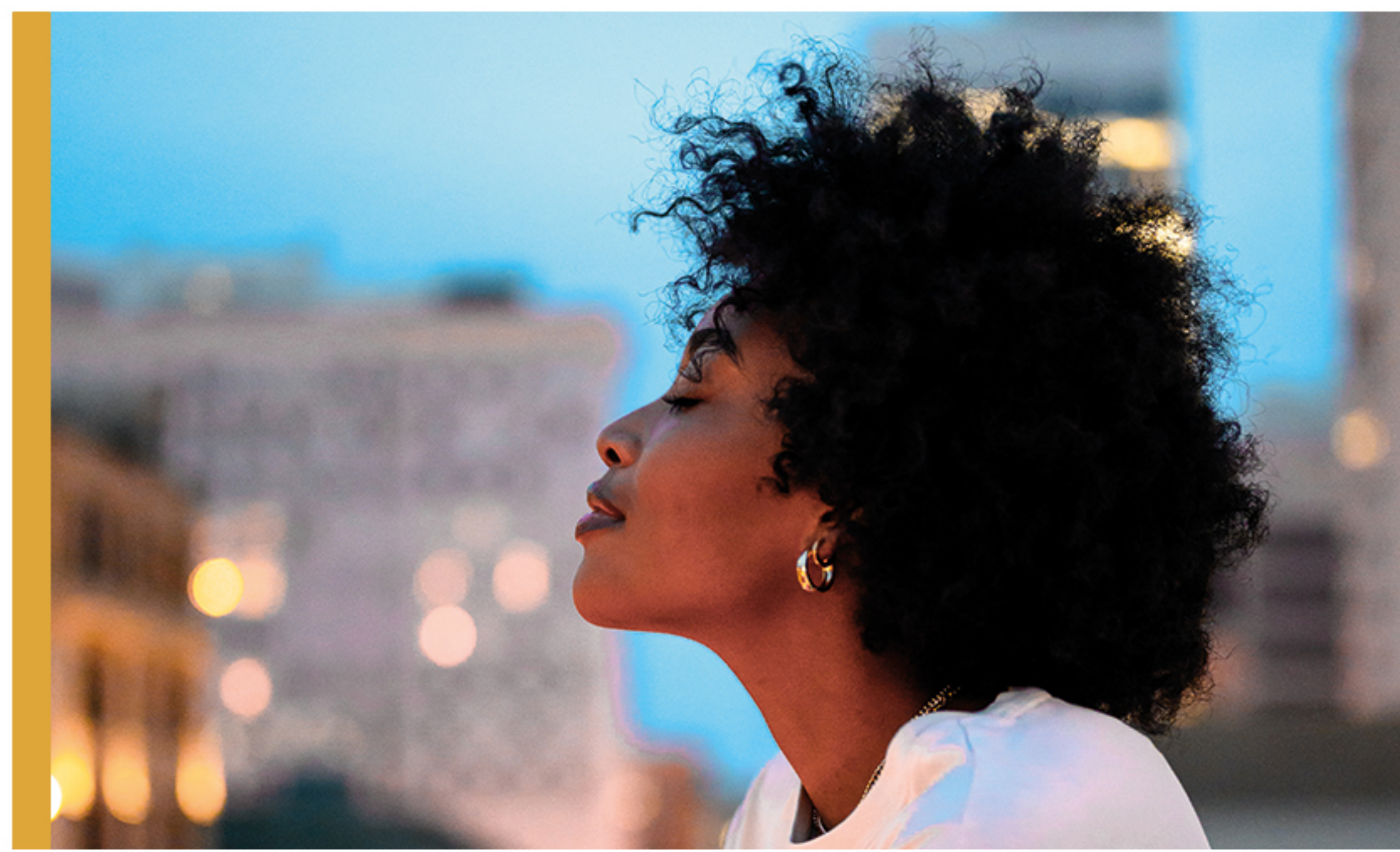
Dry Eye is part and parcel of ageing, common in most people over the age of 65. ^{1,5} As a woman, Dry Eye may be a challenge. Regular use of oral contraceptives or being pregnant increase your risk. ⁵ You are more likely to have Dry Eye if you suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and thyroid problems. ^{1,5} Your risk as a woman also increases around menopause, as hormone levels drop. ² Applying creams containing retinoids around the eyes to prevent wrinkles, may also lead to Dry Eye. ¹⁰

Last but not least, medications such as antihistamines, nasal decongestants, blood pressure medications and antidepressants, can all reduce tear production. ^{5,6}

How do you manage your Dry Eye symptoms?

The goal of treatment is to either conserve tears, increase tear production, or treat eyelid or eye surface inflammation. ⁵

Artificial tears/Ocular lubricants are the mainstay of Dry Eye management and your first point of call for Dry Eye symptoms. ³



What else can you do to reduce symptoms of Dry Eyes? ⁵

- Blink regularly when reading or staring at a computer screen.
- Increase the humidity in the air at work and at home.
- Wear sunglasses outdoors, with wraparound frames.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.
- Ask your eye care practitioner if taking dietary supplements with essential fatty acids may help your dry eye problems.



Ask your eye care practitioner for advice and more information

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