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## Supplements for Dry Eye

Are your eyes burning and tearing? Does it feel like you have sand in your eyes? Are your eyes sore, red and sensitive to light? You may have a condition called Dry Eye. <sup>1,2,3</sup> With the COVID-19 lockdown, we're all spending more time looking at screens - whether for e-learning and working from home. And being stuck indoors all day means we're exposed to low humidity and restricted airflow, all of which can lead to Dry Eye. <sup>4</sup>

**Tears are needed to provide clear vision and maintain a healthy eye 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. <sup>5,6</sup> When you don't blink often - which is the case when working on a screen - your tears evaporate faster, which dries out the eye. <sup>7,8</sup>

### The management of Dry Eye is aimed at conserving tears, increasing tear production, or treating eyelid or eye surface inflammation. <sup>5</sup>

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



### But did you know that dietary supplements may also help? <sup>5,9</sup>

Essential fatty acids, of the omega-6 and 3 series, can play a role in the control of inflammation and in promoting the recovery of the structure of the eye surface. <sup>9,10</sup> Omega-3 and 6 are called "essential," as they cannot be made by the human body, and must be introduced with the diet. <sup>9</sup>

In particular, omega-3 are found in fish and fish oils, and in green leafy vegetables, such as broccoli and spinach, in nuts and beans, in seeds and oils. Omega-6 are available in many plant oils, such as those from corn, peanut, safflower, rapeseed, sunflower; other common sources of omega-6 are poultry, eggs, cereals and whole-grain breads. <sup>9,11</sup>



Vitamin A is an essential nutrient present naturally in tear film of healthy eyes. Vitamin A plays an important role in production of the mucin layer, the most innermost lubricating layer of tear film that is crucial for a healthy tear film. <sup>10</sup>

Essential fatty acids may benefit patients with Dry Eye by reducing inflammation and by altering the composition of meibomian lipids. <sup>10</sup>

### What else can you do to reduce symptoms of Dry Eyes? <sup>5,12</sup>

- Blink often to refresh your eyes. Try to make it a habit to blink more often when looking at a monitor.
- Increase the humidity in the air at home.
- Take eye breaks. Try the 20-6-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 6 meters away for at least 20 seconds.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.



Speak to your eye care practitioner about dietary supplements which may help your dry eye problems. <sup>5</sup>

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