

inserted into your tear duct to stop tears draining away.

Patients are given a local anaesthetic before silicone plugs are inserted into the puncta. This surgery can be performed by your optometrist.

As well as treating the condition with drops or artificial tears sufferers can minimise symptoms of dry eye by making some small changes to their lifestyle.

These include:

- Eating a diet rich in Omega-3 fatty acids.

Oily fish such as tuna, salmon and sardines are all excellent sources of Omega-3.

You may also find that an Omega-3 supplement with flaxseed oil, fish oil and vitamin E will help.

- Keeping hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids (at least two litres a day) especially water or herbal teas.
- Avoiding air conditioned atmospheres where the air is artificially dry.

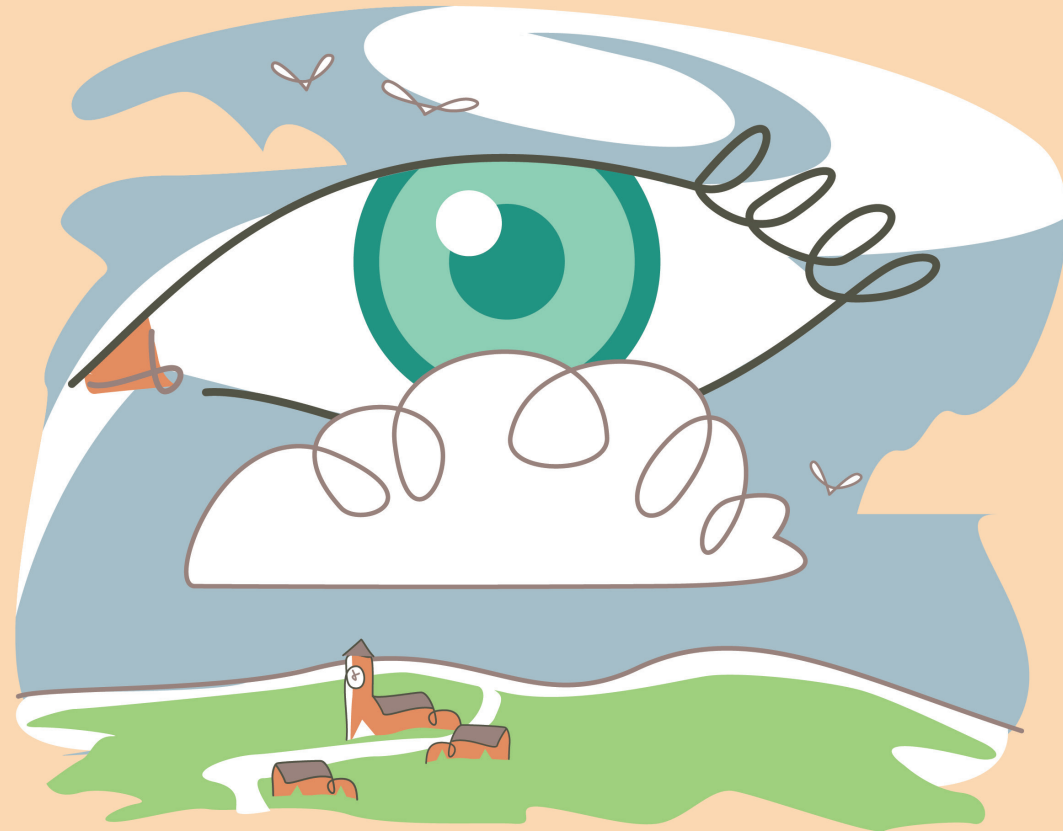
This leaflet has been published to mark National Eye Health Week 19 – 25 September 2015.

For more advice about caring for your eyes visit www.visionmatters.org.uk



NATIONAL EYE HEALTH WEEK
MONDAY 19 – SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2016
YOUR VISION MATTERS

Essential Guide to Dry Eye



... because vision matters for all life's adventures

Keratoconjunctivitis sicca or dry eye syndrome is the most common cause of eye irritation in people aged 65 and over.

What is dry eye syndrome?

Dry eye syndrome occurs when the quality or quantity of your tears are insufficient to keep the surface of the cornea moist.

Every time we blink the eyelid spreads tears across the surface of the eye. These tears drain away through the puncta (small openings in your eye lid) into your nose where they evaporate.

If tear production is reduced or inhibited in

some way our eyes will dry out and cause a painful irritation.

Who's at risk?

Women are particularly susceptible to dry eye, which is often prevalent during the menopause.

The elderly are a high risk group with one in seven people aged 65 and over suffering.

Diabetics have a 50/50 chance of suffering from the condition and half of all contact lens wearers experience symptoms of dry eye syndrome.

People who spend prolonged periods staring at a screen are also at increased risk.

Other causes of dry eye include, side-effects to medicines, illness and damage to your eyelid caused by disease or injury.

Common symptoms

Dry eye is a painful conditions characterised by the following symptoms:

- a sandy-gritty irritation that gets worse as the day goes on
- dryness
- a burning sensation
- itchy, red or tired eyes
- a feeling that you have some dust in your eye

Diagnosis

Your local optometrist can diagnose dry eye syndrome during a routine sight test. He or she will use a

slit lamp to examine the cornea and check that it is sufficiently moist.

Treatment

Treatment for this painful condition is relatively straightforward.

Your optometrist can advise on and supply a range of artificial tears and eye ointments to soothe and lubricate the eye.

Over-the-counter sprays that help re-establish the film of tears and prevent loss of moisture are also available from most pharmacies.

Alternatively, your optometrist may advise you about 'punctum plugs,' a plug that is