

DRY EYE SYNDROME

Dry eye syndrome (DES), also known as **Kerato Conjunctivitis Sicca (KCS)**, is the condition of having [dry eyes](#).

Symptoms include:

- Irritation, scratchy or foreign body sensation Burning
- Stinging
- Itching
- tearing
- sandy or gritty feeling
- Redness
- Discharge
- Frequent blinking
- Easily fatigued eyes or a heavy feeling of the eyes.
- Blurry or fluctuating vision may also occur (made worse when reading, computer, watching television, driving, or playing video games)
- Light sensitivity
- Eye pain and/or headache

The symptoms can range from mild and occasional to severe and continuous. Scarring and abrasion of the [cornea](#) may occur in some cases if dry eye syndrome is not treated.

Dry eye occurs when either the eye does not produce enough [tears](#) or when the tears evaporate too quickly (as a result of poor quality tears being produced).

This can result from:

- Allergies
- Decreased hormones associated with aging
- Pregnancy
- Thyroid eye conditions
- Eyelid inflammation (blepharitis)
- Medication/supplement use, including psychiatric medicines, OTC cold medicines, anti-histamines, beta-blockers, pain relievers, sleeping pills, diuretics, Hormones replacement, and oral contraceptives
- Sjogren's syndrome (dry mucus membranes throughout body)
- Other autoimmune disorders including Lupus and/or Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Chemical splashes / injuries to the eyes
- Eye surgery
- Infrequent blinking, associated with staring at computer or video screens, and Parkinson's
- Environmental (dusty, windy, hot/dry)
- Contact lens use
- Neurologic conditions, including stroke, Bell's palsy, Parkinson's, trigeminal nerve problem,

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- Exposure keratitis, where the eyelids do not close completely when asleep (lagophthalmos)
- Post refractive surgery (LASIK or PRK), it may generally last three to six months, or longer
- Inflammatory eye conditions, including Herpes virus infections and uveitis / iritis
- Diabetes Mellitus
- Vitamin A deficiency

Diagnosis is mostly based on the symptoms and a thorough ophthalmic examination and a number of other tests may be used.

Treatment depends on the underlying cause

- Artificial tears are the usual first line treatment.
- Stopping or changing certain medications may help.
- The medication [cyclosporin](#) or [steroid](#) eye drops may be used in some cases.
- Another option is [lacrima plugs](#) that prevent tears from draining from the surface of the eye, however this may be a temporary solution and one may require permanent closure of the lacrimal punctum surgically.

Dry eyes occasionally makes LASIK eye surgery and wearing [contact lenses](#) impossible.