

# Can Contact Lenses Make Your Eyes Dry?

One of the most common complaints of contact lens wearers is that their eyes begin to feel dry later in the day.<sup>1,2,3</sup> So don't feel alone if you encounter this, too. Fortunately for many contact lens wearers, their eyes just feel a sensation of dryness—they don't really have dry eyes. If you experience dryness symptoms with contact lens wear, there are a number of things that may help.

## Modern lenses are better

There is good evidence that modern silicone hydrogel contact lenses help prevent or reduce symptoms of contact lens-related dryness in comparison with older types of soft contact lenses.<sup>4,5,6</sup> If you have been wearing the same kind of lenses for a number of years, talk with your eye care practitioner about newer types of lenses that might cause less dryness sensation.

## The solution may be the solution

Lens care products contain preservatives, and depending on which product you use and who you are, you may have, or develop, a sensitivity to one or more of these. Only use the lens care products recommended by your eye care practitioner. Many products may seem similar, but in fact can be quite different in how they are formulated. If you experience symptoms of dryness with contact lens wear, ask your eye care practitioner which products would be best for you to use and which to avoid. There are real differences, and studies show that symptoms can be significantly improved depending on the lens care solution used.<sup>7,8</sup>

## Eye drops

Occasionally using over-the-counter contact lens comfort drops, rewetting drops or artificial tears can temporarily relieve symptoms of contact lens-related dryness. Some eye drops aren't compatible with contact lenses and may irritate your eyes.

Before starting to use eye drops with your contact lenses, be sure to ask your eye care practitioner which drops are best for you and the type of contact lenses you wear.

## Tips to keep dryness symptoms in check

Even if you have the right contact lenses and the proper lens care solution, you may still occasionally experience some feeling of eye dryness. Here are a few tips that can really help, with or without contact lenses:

- Blink regularly when you're reading or staring at a computer screen for long periods of time.
- If possible, increase the humidity level in the air at work and home.
- Wear sunglasses outdoors to reduce the exposure of your eyes to drying winds and sunlight.
- Stay hydrated! Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water every day.

## Ask the expert

You don't need to give up on contact lenses if you're experiencing contact lens-related dryness symptoms. Be sure to talk with your eye care practitioner about the options that are available to you.



**References:** 1. Begley C, Caffery B, Nichols K, Chalmers R. Responses of Contact Lens Wearers to a Dry Eye Survey. *Optom Vis Sci.* 2000; 77(1):40-46. 2. Young G, Veys J, Pritchard N, Coleman S. A Multi-Centre Study of Lapsed Contact Lens Wearers. *Ophthalmic Physiol Opt.* 2002; 22:516-527. 3. Richdale K, Sinnott L, Skadahl E, Nichols JJ. Frequency of and Factors Associated With Contact Lens Dissatisfaction and Discontinuation. *Cornea.* 2007; 26(2):168-174. 4. Chalmers R, Long B, Dillehay S, Begley C. Improving Contact Lens-Related Dryness Symptoms with Silicone Hydrogel Lenses. *Optom Vis Sci.* 2008; 85(8):778-784. 5. Young G, Chalmers R, Napier L, Hunt C, Kern J. Characterizing Contact Lens-Related Dryness Symptoms in a Cross-Section of UK Soft Contact Lens Wearers. *Contact Lens Ant Eye.* 2011; 34(2):64-70. 6. Kojima T, Matsumoto Y, Ibrahim O, et al. Effect of Controlled Adverse Chamber Environment Exposure on Tear Functions in Silicone Hydrogel and Hydrogel Soft Contact Lens Wearers. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci.* 2011; 52(12):8811-8817. 7. Amos C. Comparing Lens Care Systems for Silicone Hydrogel Lenses. *Contact Lens Spectrum.* 2007; 22(12): 40-43. 8. Garofalo R, Lemp J. Clinical Trial Experience with OPTI-FREE® PureMoist® MPDS. *Contact Lens Spectrum.* September 2011.  
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