

What lubricating eye drops do you recommend?

Eye drops are categorized into two main groups - preserved and non-preserved eye drops. For non-preserved, they will come in individual vials or single-use packaging that you can use as much as you would like for up to 24 hours.

The non-preserved tears will cause the least irritation on your eye, so you can use it as many times as you want in a day. The preserved ones will come in a bottle and I don't recommend using it more than four times a day. That's because they actually come with preservatives that can cause irritation.

You could utilize any brand, I've never found that one brand is significantly superior to another. There are gels which are thicker and may make your vision temporarily a little bit more blurry, but if you're looking for true hydration you're ideally going to want to use that. Gels are usually reserved for the evening time because of how thick they are.

In addition, select a tear option that doesn't say "gets the red out." That's one of those things where people will pick up something that says gets the red out, but it'll have more than just the artificial tears component to it. It'll have other chemicals that may get the redness out, but depending on exactly what brand or chemicals it contains, you may need to use more and more to get the redness out, and when you eventually stop using it your eye may look more red than it was before. To conclude, go for something that just has artificial tears, rather than "gets the red out."

I have tried a warm eye mask, however I find the weight/pressure on my eyes uncomfortable. Any suggestions?

While in the shower use the steam or the hot water and see if that makes it a little bit more comfortable. What I've told patients in the past is if you boil an egg, wrap it around in a towel but don't make it super hot and make sure it's comfortable to the touch so you don't burn your skin. You can hold that gently on your eye while it's closed. Tea bags are another option, but again, make sure it's not so hot that your skin will burn.

The purpose is to get the heat on your eyelids, so I wouldn't worry about the weight. If the weight is bothering you, then you have to figure out some other ways to apply heat on your eyelid so the glands can open up a little bit..

What does 20/20/20 stand for?

For every 20 minutes you spend staring at your computer or your phone, basically anything up close within your arm's reach, look at something that's about 20 feet away for about 20 seconds.

Essentially about three times an hour you want to look out the window, you want to look at something in the distance for about 20 seconds. What that's going to do is it's really going to give your eyes a little break. When we stare at the computer all day long we have to maintain that focus, we have to make an effort day after day, week after week. Focusing on something up close for long hours sometimes causes the muscles to get fatigued. So a couple of times an hour, if you look at something far away, your eye muscles will get a little break from that up close focusing. You might notice it more at the end of the day. The goal of 20/20/20 is to give your eyes a little break from focusing up close.

Is there any difference in wearing glasses or contacts to reduce strain?

For the most part, glasses are better than contacts at reducing eye strain. Contact lenses also tend to dry out when staring at the computer and that adds to the discomfort.

Can you over-use allergy eye-drops?

Overusing allergy drops will cause more irritation and sometimes even redness. If your allergy eye drop isn't working at eliminating your symptoms, then call your doctor. They may be able to prescribe you a different antihistamine eye drop.

Why should your computer not be positioned in front of a window? What if it is?

If your computer is directly in front of or behind the window, then the glare will become bothersome and it'll add to the discomfort. The glare may be especially bothersome during certain hours of the day when the sun is bright. The extra glare will increase eye strain and lead to more discomfort.

Should we still wear contact lenses in the current environment with COVID-19?

If you are wearing contact lenses, it is more important than ever to maintain good hygiene and replace lenses as recommended. For asymptomatic patients, the risk of developing COVID-19 is low. However, if you feel sick, it is recommended to discontinue use of contact lenses and switch to glasses.

What blue light glasses are most effective? It seems there are a bunch of cheap options through Amazon, etc., but I don't know how to tell if they are recommended by doctors.

Select blue light glasses that block 400 nm wavelengths.

Should I feel differently about the effect of blue light on my children vs. me?...lots of devices being used right now!

It is the same risk for you and your children. The bigger risk with kids and devices is having them hold things too close and for long periods of time, this can cause you to become nearsighted. Kids should be taking breaks every 20 minutes and keeping devices at a distance to prevent eye strain.

I've been getting styes on my eyelids. How should I treat them to make them go away?

Warm compresses are the best way to get rid of styes. Stye is a clogged gland and the best way to unclog it is heat. Try to do it 3-4 times a day for about 5 mins each time. Immediately after the warm compress, your eyes may look more red for a few minutes because of the heat, but that's okay. To avoid styes, make sure you clean the eyelids thoroughly, especially at the end of the day. Baby shampoo works really well. OcuSoft lid scrubs also help with cleaning the eyelids really well.

Does using artificial tears help lubricate the glands, or warm compresses are the only way to help the glands secrete more tears? Conversely, can you develop a tolerance for artificial tears?

Artificial tears will help with the comfort, but it won't do anything to unclog the glands or secrete more of your own tears. Warm compresses will help unclog the glands and release your own tears, but they have to be done consistently. If you only do it once in a while, then it won't really have an impact. As for developing tolerance of artificial tears, that won't happen. Preservative free artificial tears can be used as many times as needed throughout the day. Artificial tears with preservatives should be used no more than 4 times a day. After that the preservative may cause more irritation, but it won't affect your tolerance.

Is it okay to use warm tea bags on the eyes?

Yes, tea bags are perfectly fine. Just make sure it's not so hot that your skin will burn. Check the temperature on your hand first.

Does eating a healthy diet have any effect on eye health?

Definitely, yes. Omega 3 and fish oils help in reducing dry eyes. Green leafy vegetables and other colorful vegetables help with overall eye health.

How often should we get new glasses?

If you wear contact lenses, it is recommended to get your eyes checked once per year. If you wear glasses and are not having any vision issues, then every two years is okay. If you are having problems with your vision before the one year mark, do not wait, schedule an exam or follow-up appointment as needed.