



Eye on Health

Looking Out For Dry Eyes

(NAPSA)—Taking a closer look at your dry eyes could help protect your vision.

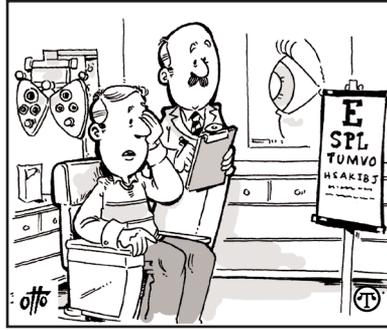
A condition called Chronic Dry Eye (CDE), also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca, can be caused by a functional problem in the tear-producing glands of the eyes that leads to decreased tear production. This decreased tear production creates an insufficient amount of tears to lubricate and protect the eye and is often responsible for people's dry eyes.

Chronic Dry Eye is among the complaints most commonly heard by eye doctors. Yet it's estimated that millions of Americans suffering from the condition go untreated. That may be because people do not realize they have the disease or because they are unaware of the implications surrounding the condition. Chronic Dry Eye can be a progressive disease and, if left untreated, it can lead to impaired vision and an increased risk of eye infection.

CDE and Eye Health

Researchers are unsure if people can reduce their odds of getting Chronic Dry Eye. However, there are steps you can take to reduce the effects of CDE:

- Visit an eye doctor if you think you have Chronic Dry Eye.
- Take regular breaks when reading or using a computer.



There are new ways to effectively treat a common cause of dry eyes.

- If you wear contact lenses, change to glasses at home.
- Wear wraparound sunglasses to prevent wind from blowing against your eyes.
- Run a humidifier in rooms where you spend a lot of time.
- Avoid rubbing your eyes.
- Talk to your eye doctor if you regularly take allergy medications, antihistamines, decongestants, diuretics, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or blood pressure medications. These may contribute to dry eye symptoms.

Available Treatment Options

Over-the-counter artificial tears can provide temporary symptom relief but do not increase a person's natural ability to produce tears. That's why doctors now can prescribe a medication

called Restasis® (cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion) 0.05 percent. The medication is currently the only prescription eyedrop available to help increase tear production in patients with Chronic Dry Eye. Increased tear production was not seen in patients using topical steroid drops or tear duct plugs. In the FDA clinical trials, some patients experienced a burning sensation upon installation of the drops. It should not be used by patients with active eye infections and has not been studied in patients with a history of herpes viral infections of the eye.

The problem of Chronic Dry Eye is one that is well known to actress Janine Turner, best known for her role as Maggie O'Connell on TV's "Northern Exposure." Prior to her diagnosis, she had trouble making it through her days on the set. "Eventually, I saw my doctor and he diagnosed me as having Chronic Dry Eye and gave me a prescription for Restasis," she explains.

Turner recently teamed up with the president of the National Women's Health Resource Center and an expert ophthalmologist to form an expert panel on dry eye to help people identify and treat their condition. For more information, visit www.RESTASIS34.com or call 1-877-377-9129.

Note to Editors: RESTASIS® (cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion) 0.05% was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December 2002 to increase tear production in patients whose tear production is presumed to be suppressed due to ocular inflammation associated with chronic dry eye. This increased tear production was not seen in patients using topical steroid drops or tear duct plugs. RESTASIS® Ophthalmic Emulsion has been available in the U.S. since April 2003.

RESTASIS® Ophthalmic Emulsion should not be used in patients with active eye infections. RESTASIS® (cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion) has not been studied in patients with a history of herpes viral infections of the eye. The most common side effect following the use of RESTASIS® (cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion) is a burning sensation (17%). Other side effects reported in 1% to 5% of patients include red eye, discharge, excessive tearing, eye pain, foreign body sensation, itching, stinging and blurring. For full RESTASIS® (cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion) prescribing information, visit www.Restasis.com.