

Enhanced Treatment Options for Dry Eye

DRY EYE IS A COMMON CONDITION THAT IS ESTIMATED TO AFFECT 92.5 MILLION AMERICANS. IF LEFT UNTREATED, INFLAMMATION CAUSED BY DRY EYE CAN DAMAGE THE LACRIMAL GLAND AND OCULAR SURFACE OF THE EYE, MAKING PROPER MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT VITAL.

WHILE LIFESTYLE AND environmental factors can cause dry eye, age is considered to be the most common cause. Contact lens wearers also may suffer from dry eye symptoms.

“As the body ages, there are physiological and hormonal changes that can affect both the quality of the tear film and the quantity of tears that are produced,” says Ralph Chu, M.D., Medical Director and owner of Chu Vision Institute. “Certain medications can also contribute to symptoms.”

Symptoms Indicative of Dry Eye

Because early treatment for dry eye is recommended to prevent inflammation damage, early diagnosis is key. Symptoms experienced at the beginning of the disease process include shortened periods of contact lens use, due to discomfort and blurred vision.

“The first symptom that a patient may complain of is intermittent blurred vision,” says Dr. Chu. “When people think of dry eye, they often think of tearing, burning and itching in the eye. However, those symptoms all occur later in the disease process. Fluctuation of vision and blurriness — especially after reading or using the computer for long periods of time — are probably the first patient complaints that a primary care physician may hear about.”

Dry Eye Management

At Chu Vision Institute, management of ocular surface disorders, including dry eye, is emphasized. The staff has participated in multiple clinical trials and treatment protocols for dry eye, so patients benefit from additional perspectives and treatment solutions that may not be available at other clinics.

Previously, artificial tears were the only therapy available; however, physicians noticed that patients’ symptoms continued to worsen because they were not addressing the underlying



pathological causes — such as medication, environmental exposure and anatomical changes — that must be addressed for effective treatment.

The development of Restasis (topical cyclosporine) has provided an effective solution for dry eye treatment that treats the underlying inflammation that causes symptoms.

Treatment for dry eye is dependent on the severity of the patient’s symptoms. If patients are complaining of blurred vision and have been determined to have dry eye, generally artificial tears are the first line of defense. If symptoms do not improve or become worse, then Restasis is prescribed. More invasive treatments to conserve tears produced by the eye can also be utilized.

“Through the development of Restasis, we have been able to provide an effective solution for patients,” says Dr. Chu. “Up until now, dry eye was a commonly undiagnosed condition because there weren’t any effective treatments. Now, we have a safe, topical medication that improves patients’ comfort and functionality and allows them to return to wearing contacts, reading or computer work without discomfort.”

For more information about services provided for dry eye at Chu Vision Institute, please visit www.chuvision.com or call (952) 835-1235. ■