

Chemotherapy can affect many parts of the body, including the eyes. Eye problems from chemotherapy are not uncommon and can range from mild to severe. Here are the most common eye-related side effects and what causes them:

1. Dry Eyes

- **Cause:** Chemo drugs can reduce tear production or affect the glands that produce tears.
 - **Symptoms:** Burning, gritty feeling, redness, or excessive tearing (from reflex tearing).
 - **Management:** Artificial tears, humidifiers, and avoiding irritants like wind or smoke.
-

2. Blurry Vision

- **Cause:** Can result from dry eyes, fluid retention, or effects on the optic nerve.
 - **Drugs Associated:** Cytarabine, methotrexate, and cisplatin.
 - **Management:** Temporary use of glasses, regular monitoring, and notifying your doctor.
-

3. Eye Infections (Conjunctivitis)

- **Cause:** Chemotherapy weakens the immune system, increasing infection risk.
 - **Symptoms:** Redness, discharge, eye pain, sensitivity to light.
 - **Management:** Prompt medical treatment with antibiotic or antiviral drops.
-

4. Tearing (Watery Eyes)

- **Cause:** Some chemo drugs irritate the tear ducts or cause them to narrow.

- **Drugs Associated:** Docetaxel (Taxotere) and paclitaxel.
 - **Management:** Warm compresses, tear duct stenting (in severe cases), or artificial tears.
-

5. Light Sensitivity (Photophobia)

- **Cause:** Due to inflammation or dry eyes.
 - **Management:** Sunglasses, hats, and avoiding bright lights.
-

6. Floaters or Flashes

- **Cause:** Rare but could be a sign of retinal problems, especially if caused by steroid use alongside chemo.
 - **Urgency:** Needs immediate evaluation to rule out retinal detachment.
-

7. Cataracts

- **Cause:** Can develop after long-term use of steroids given with chemo or radiation near the eyes.
 - **Management:** Regular eye exams; surgery if vision is significantly impaired.
-

When to See a Doctor

- Sudden vision loss or changes
- Persistent eye pain
- Redness with discharge

- Flashes of light or floaters
-

If you're undergoing chemotherapy and experience eye symptoms, it's important to tell your oncologist. They might refer you to an ophthalmologist familiar with cancer-related eye issues.

Would you like a list of specific chemo drugs and their associated eye effects?