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Tears

Also called: Lacrimation

You may only think of tears as those salty drops that fall from your eyes when you cry. Actually, your tears clean your eyes every time you blink. Tears also keep your eyes moist, which is important for your vision.

Tear glands produce tears, and tear ducts carry the tears from the glands to the surface of your eye. Problems with the tear system can include too many tears, too few tears, or problems with the tear ducts. Treatment of the problem depends on the cause.



Diagnosis and Tests

- **Eye Problems: Symptom Checker Flowchart** [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/eye-problems/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-los-ojos/?adfree=true>]


Treatments and Therapies

- **Choosing Wisely When It Comes to Eye Care: Punctal Plugs for Dry Eye** [<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/news/choosing-wisely-punctal-plugs>] (American Academy of Ophthalmology)
- **How to Use Eye Drops** [<https://www.safemedication.com/-/media/SafeMed/Flyers/Eye-Drops-Flyer.pdf>]
(American Society of Health-System Pharmacists) - **PDF**
- **Tired, Achy Eyes? Finding Relief for Eye Discomfort** [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2024/09/tired-achy-eyes>]
 (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/tiene-los-ojos-cansados-y-adoloridos>]



Specifics

- **Blocked Tear Duct** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/blocked-tear-duct/symptoms-causes/syc-20351369?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/blocked-tear-duct/symptoms-causes/syc-20351369?p=1>]
- **Canaliculitis** [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/eye-disorders/eyelid-and-tearing-disorders/canaliculitis>]
(Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-oft%C3%A1lmicos/trastornos-de-los-p%C3%A1rpados-y-de-las-l%C3%A1grimas/canaliculitis>]
- **Dacryocystitis** [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/eye-disorders/eyelid-and-tearing-disorders/dacryocystitis>]
(Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-oft%C3%A1lmicos/trastornos-de-los-p%C3%A1rpados-y-de-las-l%C3%A1grimas/dacriocistitis>]
- **Dry Eye** [<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/dry-eye>]  (National Eye Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nei.nih.gov/espanol/aprenda-sobre-la-salud-ocular/enfermedades-y-afecciones-de-los-ojos/sindrome-del-ojo-seco>]
- **What Is Dry Eye?** [<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-dry-eye>]  (American Academy of Ophthalmology)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aao.org/salud-ocular/enfermedades/ojo-seco>]

Genetics

- Triple A syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/triple-a-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Dry Eye Syndromes [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Dry+Eye+Syndromes%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Lacrimal Apparatus Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Lacrimal+Apparatus+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles



References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Impact of temporal tear meniscus height on the tear osmolarity measurements. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40721497>]
- Article: Identification of Matrix Metalloproteinase 3 as a Potential Biomarker for Dry... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40719544>]
- Article: Dry eye-related tear biomarkers MMP-2, MMP-13, and IFN-γ: potential predictors of... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40707963>]
- Tears -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Tears%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Lacrimal+Apparatus+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]




Reference Desk

- NEI for Kids: Glossary [<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/nei-for-kids/glossary>]  (National Eye Institute)

Find an Expert

- Find an Ophthalmologist [<https://secure.aao.org/aao/find-ophthalmologist>] (American Academy of Ophthalmology)
Also in Spanish [<https://secure.aao.org/aao/encontrar-ofthalmologo>]
- Finding an Eye Doctor [<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/healthy-vision/finding-eye-doctor>]  (National Eye Institute)
- National Eye Institute [<https://www.nei.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Nasolacrimal Duct Obstruction [<https://www.aapos.org/glossary/nasolacrimal-duct-obstruction>] (American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus)
- Surgery for Tear Duct Blockage [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/tear-duct-obstruct-surgery.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/tear-duct-obstruct-surgery.html>]
- What's a Tear Duct Probe (Treating Tear-Duct Blockage)? (For Parents) [https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/tear_duct_probe_animation.html]  (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/tear_duct_probe_animation.html]
- What's Tear Duct Massage (Treating Tear-Duct Blockage)? (For Parents) [https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/tear_duct_massage_animation.html]  (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/tear_duct_massage_animation.html]

Patient Handouts

- Blocked tear duct [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001016.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001016.htm>]
- Dry eye syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000426.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000426.htm>]
- Watery eyes [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003036.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003036.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Blocked tear duct [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001016.htm>]
- Dry eye syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000426.htm>]
- Lacrimal gland tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001611.htm>]
- Schirmer test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003501.htm>]
- Watery eyes [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003036.htm>]

Related Health Topics

- Sjogren's Syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/sjogrenssyndrome.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Tears* is the National Eye Institute [<https://nei.nih.gov/>]

NIH MedlinePlus Magazine

Doctor's Perspective: Living with Dry Eye [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/a-doctors-perspective-living-with-dry-eye>]

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