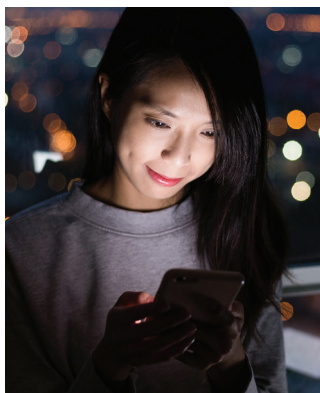


Clear facts on eye drops

Staring at a computer, dry winter air, cold temperatures, allergies, medications. A number of things can make eyes red, dry or uncomfortable.



Many people turn to a bottle of eye drops for quick relief. But, if you use eye drops often, there are a few things you should know.



SEEING RED

Redness relief eye drops contain an ingredient that shrinks blood vessels in the eye, giving you that bright-eyed effect. But, these drops can be harmful if you overuse them.

Using redness drops frequently can cause a “rebound” effect, making the redness even worse. Then you feel like you have to use the drops more and more to control the redness.

Don't use redness relief drops on a regular basis. If your eyes are often red, you should see an eye care professional to get to the root cause.



KEEP AN EYE ON PRESERVATIVES

Many eye drops contain preservatives. These keep germs from growing in the drops. They allow you to use the same bottle of drops for a longer period of time.

Some people find that the preservatives in eye drops make their eyes itchy or irritated. If you notice any burning or stinging after using eye drops, even artificial tears, stop using them.

Preservative-free eye drops are available. These work well for people who are sensitive to preservatives. They are usually in small single-use vials that come in a pack. You use the vial once and throw it away.



EYE HEALTH RED FLAGS

The best way to keep eyes healthy is to see your eye health professional regularly. Ask your optometrist or ophthalmologist how often they should see you. It will depend on your age, any health issues and your eye health history.

Call your eye professional right away if you notice:

- Pain or itching in the eye
- Redness that won't go away
- Dry eyes that aren't relieved with artificial tears
- Changes in vision, such as not seeing as well
- Cloudy or blurry vision
- Floaters or other spots in your vision



ARTIFICIAL TEARS

Artificial tear eye drops are generally safe to use regularly. They don't contain any active ingredients. Instead, they are designed to mimic your own tears. These work well for occasional dryness or discomfort.

Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology