
TEAR SUPPLEMENTS

Tear supplements come in three types: preserved drops, non-preserved drops, and ointments. All are available over the counter in most drug stores. There are many indications for tear supplements, but the following applies to everyone.

You may use artificial tear drops as often as you wish. One drop for each administration is enough. Use the drops BEFORE doing activities that you know usually make your eyes burn or tear. If you are using the eye drops for itching, use them both before and after the activity that usually makes your eyes itch.

_____ Use Artificial Tear Drops

Buy any artificial tear supplement that comes in a bottle. These are all preserved drops and they are much cheaper than the non-preserved ones. These are all about the same. Some brand names that you might look for are Hypotears, Aquatears, and Artificial Tears, but these are probably no better than the others. DO NOT buy any drops that are supposed to “take the red out.” When used chronically, these drops can cause serious eye problems.

_____ Use Only Preservative Free Drops

Some people are allergic to the preserved drops that come in a bottle. You will know if you are allergic, because the drops will sting when you put them in your eyes and then you will need to buy preservative-free drops. These come in individual dispensing units, and because of the extra packaging are much, much more expensive. Some good brands are Bion Tears, Cellufresh, Theratears, Systane, and Refresh Plus. If your eyes are very dry and you need more protection, a thicker non-preserved drop is Celluvisc. To pick a drop, look at the amount of carboxymethylcellulose (CMC) or methylcellulose contained. The more CMC, the thicker the drop, the longer it will last, but the more it will also temporarily blur your vision.

_____ Use Artificial Tear Ointment

There are many brands. One of the cheapest is Lacrilube. This ointment should be placed in the eyes at bed time. If you wish to use ointments during the day, you may want to alternate eyes. Put the ointment in one eye, and then two hours later put it in the other eye. This will decrease the amount of blurring of your vision. After using the ointment at night, if you wish to clear your vision in the morning, use an eye rinse. Many brands are available. Two options are Eye Stream and Dacriose.