

## Eyelid Surgery

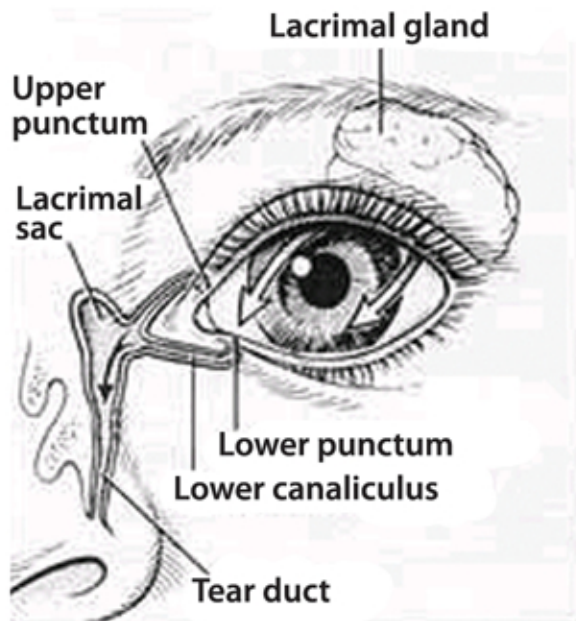
# Tearing

By Stephen J. Laquis, MD

**T**earing is a very common and annoying problem. Although it usually does not affect the eye adversely it can cause significant hindrances in many activities of daily living as well as blurred vision.

Treatment of tearing requires first proper identification of the cause or causes of the tearing followed by appropriate and tailored treatment. This is especially important as tearing many times is not caused by one problem but is multifactorial. The etiology of tearing almost always can be attributed to two basic causes, overproduction of tears or drainage problems.

The tears are produced by glands around the eye and drain into the duct or drain on the inner corner of the eyelids. Any irritation of the eye will cause a reflex overproduction of tears to soothe the eye and resultant tearing. Most commonly this irritation stems from common conditions such as dryness, allergies or blepharitis. Tears cross the eye and enter the tear drain openings into the main duct and finally into the nose. Any disruption or blockage along that path may result in excessive tearing.



### About Dr Laquis

*Dr. Laquis earned his medical degree from New York Medical College. He completed his internship in Internal Medicine and his Ophthalmology residency at Yale University. After his residency he completed a two year fellowship at Vanderbilt University through the prestigious American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons. In addition to maintaining a successful private practice with locations in Bonita Springs and Fort Myers, he is the Chief of Ophthalmology for Lee Memorial Health System and an Assistant Professor at the University of South Florida where he trains surgeons in eyelid, cosmetic, and orbital surgery.*

### Dry Eye Syndrome

Dry eye syndrome is caused by a lack of sufficient tears to lubricate the eye. It may surprise you that increased tearing is a symptom of dry eye syndrome, but the increased tears in someone with dry eyes are an adaptive mechanism the body has developed in an attempt to counteract the dryness. At the time that the overproduction occurs it usually is insufficient to lubricate the eye despite the amount being produced.

The symptoms of dry eye include, increased tearing, gritty/scratchy feeling on the eye, burning/itching of the eyes, redness of the eyes, blurred vision, light sensitivity, and a foreign body sensation in the eye. Certain medications like antihistamines, chronic health conditions such

as sjogrens syndrome, and climates (those that are dry and windy) can increase one's potential to suffer from dry eye syndrome. In addition, activities that require concentration and decreased blinking such as reading computer work and driving can aggravate dry eyes and worsen symptoms.

Treatment of dry eye syndrome requires environmental modification to avoid triggers (excessive fan use, exposure to allergens), and the regular use of artificial tears. Artificial tears are available over the counter and come in two basic forms, tears and gels. The tear form are great for using during the day, while the gel form is best for overnight use as they may blur vision. If use of the tears and gels does not result in improved symptoms, your doctor may recommend a prescription eye drop that helps the body increase tear production. Beyond that, it is sometimes necessary to use plugs in the puncta (tear drains) so that less tears are able to drain and more tears stay on the eye for lubrication. The insertion of tear plugs is a quick and simple in-office procedure. A more permanent closure of the tear drain may be recommended but is usually reserved for extreme cases.

### Blepharitis

Blepharitis is a condition caused by inflammation of the oil glands in the eyelids. Generally, this condition is considered chronic as it cannot be cured and treatment is aimed at managing symptoms. The symptoms of blepharitis may include increased tearing, red eyes, a foreign body sensation in the eye (such as grittiness or burning) an oily or greasy appearance to the eyelids, itchy eyelids, swollen eyelids, crusting around the eyelids, light sensitivity, and loss of eyelashes. There are certain medical conditions that can predispose one to suffering from blepharitis, such as rosacea, seborrheic dermatitis, and environmental allergies. In order to manage the symptoms of blepharitis patients need to adhere to an ongoing regimen of eyelid hygiene which includes daily warm compresses and cleansing of the eyelids with a commercial eyelid scrub or a small amount of baby shampoo. Exacerbations of blepharitis are sometimes managed with certain antibiotic ointments or eye drops and occasionally a short course of oral antibiotics. It is not uncommon for patients to have dry eyes associated with blepharitis, this is often due to the fact that the blepharitis results in a poor quality of tear production that doesn't adequately lubricate the eye. Therefore, judicious use of artificial tears is recommended for blepharitis in addition to dry eyes. It is also prudent to attempt treatment of the underlying condition causing the blepharitis, if one exists.