



Women's Eye Health & Safety

Of all people affected by vision impairment and blindness, two-thirds are female. A likely factor for the increased prevalence in women may be due to longer lifespans compared to men, leading to greater susceptibility of eye disease. The following preventative measures should be taken to decrease the risk of developing eye disease:

1. Don't smoke. Smoking increases the risk of age-related macular degeneration, cataracts and Fuchs endothelial corneal dystrophy. Treatment options exist, but these eye diseases are debilitating and not curable.

2. Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight may lead to obesity which can negatively affect the eye through diabetic retinopathy and cataracts.

3. Protect eyes from the sun. When outdoors, wear sunglasses or hats with brims. Children are especially at risk of eye damage due to the sun.

Some symptoms may be remedied by over-the-counter (OTC) options while more serious conditions may require physician consultation and potential prescription therapies.

Table 1 summarizes eye symptoms and the OTC products that may alleviate particular symptoms.

Table 1. Eye Symptoms & Appropriate OTC Action

Symptom	Active Ingredient	OTC Product Examples
Dry eye	polyvinyl chloride, dextran, polyethylene glycol, povidone, glycerin, hypromellose	Thera Tears, Systane, Artificial Tears
Itchy, watery eye	ketotifen, pheniramine	Naphcon A, Alaway, Zaditor
Stye	mineral oil, white petrolatum	Stye Ointment Relief
Redness	naphazoline, tetrahydrozoline, oxymetazoline, phenylephrine	Visine, Clear Eyes Redness Relief
Corneal edema	hypertonic sodium chloride	Muro 128

A physician should be consulted if you experience any of the following symptoms, as they may be a sign of a more serious eye condition:

- Decreased vision
- Difficulty seeing during daily activities
- Loss of peripheral or central vision
- Eye pain
- Sharp, dull or persistent
- Drainage
- Crusting, especially in morning
- Discharge from eye

- Floaters/ flashes
- Spots, flickering lights
- Halos
- Increased glare around lights
- Double vision
- Side-by-side, up-and-down or sideways