

7 Little-Known Effects Of Having Extremely Dry Eyes

By [CAROLYN STEBER](#) | 3 days ago | **f**



There are so many symptoms and problems that can stem from [having dry eyes](#), including blurry vision, pain, redness, and even weird visual effects. It's nobody's definition of a good time. And yet so many folks deal with it on a regular basis.

"Studies show anywhere from 30 to 60 million Americans suffer from some [form of dry eye](#), especially in the winter months," [Dr. Ming Wang, MD, PhD](#), of Wang Vision 3D Cataract & LASIK Center, tells Bustle. That's a lot of people rubbing their eyes and blinking frantically in an effort to see.

While there are quite a few issues that can [cause dry eye](#), it's typically due to an oil problem in the eye, eye surgeon Dr. Brian Boxer Wachler, founder of [The Boxer Wachler Vision Institute](#), tells Bustle. "Specialized glands (meibomian glands) in the eyelids become inflamed and produce inflamed oils, which is common as we get older," he says. "These oils go into your tear film and voilà, dry eyes." This form of dry eye is usually treated by applying warm compresses to the eye area.

The second type of dry eye can be chalked up [to insufficient tears](#), which is often remedied with over-the-counter eye drops. For more extreme cases, "there are other options to increase lubrication such as [punctal plugs](#) and prescription moisture-producing eye drops," Dr. Wachler says. Let a doctor know if you experience any of the symptoms below, so they can figure out the [right remedy for you](#).

1 You Wake Up With Bloodshot Eyes

Dry eyes come with many a symptom. "On the mild end of the spectrum, people can wake up with irritation and bloodshot eyes," Dr. Wachler says. The best way to handle this is by dropping in a few over-the-counter artificial tears to help [lubricate your peepers](#), before going on with your day.

Just make sure you choose the right kind. "For dry eye you do not want to use drops that have vasoconstrictive medications in them (no get the red out drops) and instead just want pure moisturizing drops that try to heal the small cracks that form, like lotion for dry skin, and supplement your own tear production," Benjamin Bert, MD, ophthalmologist at [MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center](#), tells Bustle.

2 It's Painful To Look At Screens

If you have more advanced dry eye, staring at your phone or computer screen — especially for long periods of time — can be a big pain.

"As the disease gets more involved, the dry eye irritation can make working on the computer or looking at [your] smartphone a nightmare because those activities [make dry eye worse](#)," Dr. Wachler says. To give your eyes a rest, it can help to do the 20/20/20 trick. "Take a break every 20 minutes and look at something 20 feet away for about 20 seconds," Dr. Toni Albrecht, OD, of [InVision Distinctive Eyewear](#), tells Bustle. "When you're focused back on your screen, make a conscious effort to blink to help prevent dry eyes."

3 Central Heating Is Your Worst Enemy

If you have dry eyes, central air can quickly become your worst enemy. "Central air, heating systems, fireplaces, and portable heaters dry out the interior air and can reduce air quality, which leads to dry eye," Dr. Wang says. The breeze they produce can also blow into your eyeballs, and make them even drier.

To make sure your apartment doesn't contribute to the issues, there are some things you can do. As Dr. Bert says, "If you are in a dry environment then [having a humidifier](#) [...] can help to reduce the symptoms of dry eye." As can putting in more eye drops.

4It Feels Like Something's In Your Eye

Dry eye can come with many mild but highly annoying symptoms, including the sensation that something's stuck in your eye, Dr. Bert says. Even though nothing's actually there, it can lead to a burning or scratchy sensation, which can be maddening.

5Blinking Can Make Things Worse

If they feel dry, your first instinct will be to blink more often to coat your eyes with tears. And yet you might notice that, with every blink, your vision blurs or changes, Dr. Bert says. This can be quite annoying when you're trying to read or drive, and is often a sign you need to put in some eye drops, ASAP.

6You'll Feel Extra Tired

Even when you're not particularly tired, having dry eyes can make you want to take a nap, "since it feels like the eyes want to close on their own," Dr. Bert says. You might notice it most while at work, as you struggle to keep your dry eyes open.

7There Are "Halos" Around Lights

With severe cases of dry eye, "little cracks form on the surface of the cornea, the clear portion at the front of the eye," Dr. Bert says. "When cracks (superficial punctate erosions) happen it is similar to changing the cornea from being a clear window to a slightly frosted window. Not having the visual axis completely clear leads to [additional visual symptoms](#): during the day it can cause additional glare or sensitivity to light while at night these changes also cause additional glare or halos around lights."

While dry eye is a common issue, it's one that can have a big impact on your day. If you notice any of these symptoms, [let an eye doctor know](#). They can figure out the cause of your dry eyes, and suggest the best course of treatment, so you can stop rubbing your eyes, and get back to your life.