

Women's Health **UPDATE**

Many Women Unaware Of Differences In Common Over-The-Counter Eye Drops

(NAPSA)—If you had a nagging cough every day for over a year, what would you do? If you're like most women, you'd see a doctor before it even got to that point. Fortunately, women are increasingly aware of the importance of proper nutrition, protecting their skin and receiving regular breast exams. Many women, however, are still turning a "blind eye" to maintaining their eye health.


Selecting eye drops can be an overwhelming experience with many different types and brands of over-the-counter eye drops on the market. The Red Hot Mamas® and Allergan, Inc., a global leader in eye care, recently conducted a nationwide survey of 371 women ages 45 to 65 who regularly experience at least one symptom of dry eye, and found that two-thirds of women experiencing dry eye symptoms were not aware of any difference between two common types of over-the-counter eye drops that are designed with different purposes—vasoconstrictors and artificial tears. While vasoconstrictors take redness out of the eyes by constricting blood vessels, artificial tears, like OPTIVE™ Sensitive Preservative-Free Lubricant Eye Drops lubricate the surface of the eye to provide temporary relief of dry eye symptoms, which may include eye dryness, itching, irritation, excessive tearing, blurred vision, sensitivity to light and foreign body sensation. Without this knowledge, many women may not be using the appropriate drops to treat their symptoms.

While approximately 20 million people in the United States have experienced dry eye symptoms, a

Common OTC Eye Drops

Though most women surveyed were not aware of differences in eye drops, they are designed for different purposes:

- Artificial tears—designed to lubricate the surface of the eye to provide temporary relief of dry eye symptoms
- Vasoconstrictors—designed to take redness out of the eye by constricting blood vessels

Visit dryeye.com to learn more about dry eye and to take a quiz you can share with your eye care professional to help determine whether you experience chronic dry eye and discuss treatment options. 

medical condition called chronic dry eye often affects women because of hormonal changes due to aging and menopause. Other causes of dry eye include inflammation, certain medications and various systemic conditions.

"We encourage women to focus on feeling good about menopause by taking personal control and gathering information during this natural transition," said Karen Giblin, president of Red Hot Mamas, the nation's largest menopause management education organization. "To that end, we are concentrating our efforts on raising awareness of dry eye, an often overlooked consequence of menopause."

Approximately 60 percent of women surveyed reported trying two to four different brands of over-the-counter eye drops before visiting an eye doctor to discuss their condition. (n=76)

"Artificial tears can provide temporary relief of dry eye symptoms, but they do not treat the underlying causes of chronic dry

eye. Anyone experiencing the symptoms of dry eye or using artificial tears several times a day or on a regular basis should visit an eye doctor immediately, instead of continuing to try different over-the-counter artificial tears on their own," said Frank A. Bucci Jr., MD, founder and medical director of Bucci Cataract and Laser Vision Institute in Wilkes-Barre, PA. "An eye doctor can diagnose chronic dry eye and may recommend adding a prescription therapy."

The survey also revealed that many women are experiencing their symptoms on an ongoing basis. Approximately 60 percent of respondents have experienced their symptoms for more than a year, with nearly 13 percent reporting they have experienced symptoms for more than 10 years. (N=371)

When speaking with your eye doctor, make sure to start off the conversation by telling him or her how long you've been using artificial tears, the number of different artificial tears you've used and how your dry eye symptoms may have affected your daily activities.

Chronic dry eye can cause significant discomfort and interfere with reading, watching television, working on a computer or driving at night. If left untreated over time, chronic dry eye can lead to impaired vision or increased risk of infection.

Visit dryeye.com to take a dry eye quiz that can help start a conversation with your eye doctor about chronic dry eye and available treatment options. For more information about menopause or to locate a Red Hot Mamas program, visit www.redhotmamas.org.

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The survey is sponsored by Allergan, Inc.