

Health Awareness

Dry Eye: More Than A Minor Annoyance

(NAPS)—Approximately 16 million people in the U.S. suffer from dry eye symptoms. So many deal with the burning, irritation and general discomfort that dry eye is one of the top reasons people see their eye doctor. While the symptoms are what patients focus on, what they may not realize is that dry eye can impact vision, both short term and, in some cases, permanently.

The tear film protects and perfects the surface of the eye, known as the cornea, which is the first line of focus. When areas of dryness appear, vision can



Experiencing dry eye is a good reason to see your eye doctor.

become blurred. Also, dry eye can affect the health of the cornea, which can lead to significant damage and discomfort.

“Patients shouldn’t ignore dry eye symptoms or try to manage them on their own. The health of the eye and vision is at stake,” said Stephen Slade, M.D. of Slade & Baker Vision. “It is important that the symptoms be thoroughly evaluated during annual eye exams. Patients should know there have been a lot of advancements in the treatment of dry eye.”

During an eye exam, eye doctors evaluate the overall health of the eye, including the cornea as well as the tear ducts and glands that contribute to the tear film. This is particularly important for those wearing contact lenses for vision correction as lens use can contribute to dry eye. In fact, for those who are considering a vision correction procedure, like LASIK, part of the evaluation for candidacy includes a thorough exam of the surface of the eye and any signs of dry eye. Eye doctors will often prescribe a dry eye treatment regimen to restore the surface of the eye of a patient dealing with dry eye symptoms before recommending laser vision correction.

Everyone should have an annual eye exam—particularly if you are having symptoms of dry eye. If you are looking for an eye doctor to discuss your eye health and vision correction needs, visit www.eye-you.org.