



Artificial Tears/Liquigels/Ointments

Artificial tears are frequently suggested in the treatment of patients with dry eyes. A drop of artificial tears can be used 1-4 x a day without too much disruption in one's daily activities. The more often the drops are required to alleviate symptoms the more difficult it is to stay compliant and the more severe the dry eye is likely to be. If frequent use of artificial tears is needed then other treatment modalities may be helpful.

Artificial tears come in many varieties and there are no brand names that are necessarily better than others for every individual.

Artificial Tear Replacements

Preserved (bottles with screw cap tops)

All screw cap eye drop bottles require a preservative. Some cheaper artificial tears use BAK or benzalkonium chloride. **Avoid artificial tears with BAK.** Often the bottle does not indicate what the preservative is and should be avoided. Below are some commonly used artificial tears that are preserved. The thickness varies. Thinner drops don't blur the vision as much but don't give as much sustained relief from the symptoms of dry eyes such as burning, scratching, or foreign body sensation. The thicker drops (Liquigels) last longer but will blur the vision more. Then of course there are the ointments which give the most relief but blur the vision the most. Ointments are usually used at bedtime. Each individual has to decide what works best for him.



Other similar drops

Theratears, Systane Balance,
Refresh Advantage, Refresh Tears
Bion Tears, Refresh Optive
Soothe

Preservative Free (PF)

Non-preserved tears should be used if you have to use drops more than 4 x a day. Preservative free tears come in individual plastic vials in which you twist off the top. This small plastic top can usually be placed back on the tube top so that you can reuse the drops in the tube. The drops should never be held over until the next day. At the start of each day a new fresh tube should be opened. Again PF tears come in different thicknesses. You can experiment to see which thickness works best for you.

