

Do you have dry eyes, redness or blurry vision? It could be Mechanical Dry Eye.

Ocular surface disease (OSD) is used to describe any number of conditions that affect the cornea. One example of ocular surface disease is Mechanical Dry Eye (MDE) – also known as Conjunctivochalasis or CCh. It is an age-related disorder often found in individuals over age 60.

Mechanical Dry Eye can be misdiagnosed or overlooked because the symptoms are often similar to other types of ocular surface diseases such as dry eye, blepharitis, or allergic eye disease. Symptoms of Mechanical Dry Eye include:

- Eye dryness
- Eye pain
- Eye redness
- Blurry vision
- Excessive watering of the eye

How Mechanical Dry Eye Causes Dry Eyes

There is a thin clear layer of tissue between the eye and the eyelid called the conjunctiva that extends from the edge of the cornea to the inside of the eyelid. It acts like a pocket that holds a reservoir of tears, keeping the eyes lubricated and comfortable with each blink. In Mechanical Dry Eye, this tissue can loosen and wrinkle with age and disrupt the normal process that lubricates the eyes. Normal eyes have a space between the eyeball and the lower eyelid that hold a reservoir of tears. Tears from this reservoir are spread over the eye during the blinking process. In MDE, excess folds of loose and wrinkled conjunctiva can block this tear reservoir, preventing tear retention, tear spreading, and cause dry eyes.

In order to treat Mechanical Dry Eye effectively, your physician will determine how severe your condition is. He or she will also take into consideration your overall health and any specific symptoms. This information will help him or her choose the right therapeutic option for you.

Treatment Options

In the early stages of Mechanical Dry Eye, ocular lubricants are often the first line of treatment as they can replace reduced tear film on the eye. Prescription eye drops are often used to help the eye produce more tears. However, ocular lubricants and prescription eye drops only

provide short term relief for the patient, they do not solve the root cause of Mechanical Dry Eye.

For long term relief from Mechanical Dry Eye, your eye doctor may recommend an outpatient procedure that will help restore normal eye function and appearance. This procedure is known as Reservoir Restoration. During this procedure, your eye doctor will surgically restructure the conjunctiva blocking the tear reservoir in your eye.

If you feel that you may have Mechanical Dry Eye, please contact your eye care professional immediately. He or she will work with you to determine your eye health and the best treatment options for you.