

Guidance on the use of eye lubricants for dry eye conditions in primary care

Red Flags: Refer for same-day specialist assessment if acute glaucoma, keratitis, or iritis is suspected because of:

- Moderate-to-severe eye pain or photophobia.
- Marked redness in one eye only.
- Reduced visual acuity.

Typical symptoms: Feelings of dryness, grittiness, or soreness in both eyes, which worsen through the day. May get 'tired eyes' when reading or watching TV

Normal drops

Preservative free : Consider preservative free formulations if the person is: intolerant of preservative in tear supplements; has moderate to severe dry eye disease requiring drops *more than 4* times per day; is using multiple preserved topical medications; or uses soft or hybrid contact lens.

First line

Hypromellose 0.3% eye drops
(£1/bottle, 1 month expiry)

(0.5% drops can also be used which are slightly more viscous)

First line

Evolve® (carmellose 0.5%)
(£5/bottle, 3 month expiry)

Consider addition of Vita –POS® eye ointment (liquid paraffin with vitamin A) 1 drop to affected eye(s) at night

Second line (thicker viscosity)

Clinitas® (carbomer 0.2%) eye gel
(£1.50/tube, 1 month expiry)

Second line (thicker viscosity):

Celluvisc® (carmellose 1%)
(£3 for 30 UDVs):

Refer or obtain specialist advice if:

- Symptoms are uncontrolled despite appropriate treatment for about 4 weeks.
- Diagnosis requires specialist assessment (apply a lower threshold for obtaining specialist advice for younger people).
- Vision deteriorates.
- Ulcers or other signs of corneal damage occur.
- Associated disease requires specialist management (e.g. Sjögren's syndrome or eyelid deformities).

NB: Even the thicker viscosity drops only blur the vision for a minute. The night time ointment only blurs the vision slightly.

Tables of eye lubricants are available at <http://www.nottsapc.nhs.uk/media/1259/eye-lubricants.pdf>