

Dry Eye and Eye Infections

Dry eye syndrome (DES), known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS), is generally associated with aging and the lack or loss of **tear** production. **Conjunctivitis**, a common eye infection, can happen at any age and is commonly called pink eye, as it makes the eye appear pink or red. The causes of dry eye range from autoimmune diseases such as Sjögren syndrome, to allergies, pregnancy, and certain types of medication.

Tear production is extremely important in eye health. Tears are produced by the **lacrimal gland** and include the following functions: **lubricating** the eyes, removing **irritants**, and aiding the immune sys-

tem. They are **composed of** three layers: lipid, **aqueous**, and **mucous** and in general are made up of water, salt, antibodies, and lysozymes although the composition can vary. Emotional tears, for example, are different to those caused by irritants. Whether it is dry eye or an infection, **relief** is available at the pharmacy.

VOCABULARY

eye infections	Augeninfektionen
tear	Träne
conjunctivitis	Bindehautentzündung
lacrimal gland	Tränenrüse
lubricating	ölend, schmierend
irritants	Reizstoffe
composed of	bestehend aus
aqueous	wässrig
mucous	(hier) Schleimschicht
relief	Linderung
ophthalmologist	Augenarzt, Augenärztin
prescribe	verschreiben
appointment	Termin
cancellation	Absage
in demand	gefragt
discharge	Ausfluss, Absonderung
contradictory	widersprüchlich
draughts	Luftzüge
dust	Staub
phial (also spelled vial)	Phiole

PTA: Guten Tag.

Female customer: I'm sorry but I don't speak German.

No problem. I speak a little English. How may I help you?

I was just at the **ophthalmologist** and she wanted to **prescribe** steroids or ciclosporin for my eyes.

Do you have dry eye syndrome?

Yes, that's what she said. Apparently it isn't that bad. Thank goodness I went to her when I did! I only got a quick **appointment** because of a **cancellation!**

Yes, they are very much in demand. Do you have a prescription?

No, I told her I would try an OTC product first to see if that helps.

Do you mind me asking a few questions so that I can give you the correct medication for your problem?

No, not at all.

Okay. Do you use contact lenses? You see they can cause irritation to the surface of the eye.

No, I don't.

Is there any **discharge** from your eyes? I know it sounds **contradictory**, but when the eyes are irritated, they release tears.

No, thankfully, there is no discharge.

That's good. Do you work on the computer a lot?

Yes, in fact I do. Why?

When we concentrate, we don't blink as much as normal, and this is one of the things that can lead to dry eye. Reading for longer periods, driving, and watching television are some of the others. Smoke, hot air, **draughts**, and **dust** can also cause it.

So, what do you recommend?

We have artificial tears without preservatives, which will not further irritate your eyes, in an eye-drop bottle, or as single use **phials**.

I'll take the single use phials as the doctor recommended applying the drops a few times a day.

Please make sure not to touch your eyes with the phial, as that could irritate them. And if you notice that it is not getting better, you should go to your ophthalmologist immediately!

Of course!

Goodbye.

Thank you and goodbye. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*



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