

The Visionary



Cornea Research
Foundation of America



Dry Eye

Winter | 2013

Patient Perspective



"Don't give up!" That's the advice Terri Schroeder, a dry eye patient at Price Vision Group and participant in one of the Foundation's past dry eye studies recently gave when asked about her dry eye experience. Below is her story. Read more patient stories on the Forum at www.corneaforum.org.

"Many years ago, I had LASIK with Dr. Price. I experienced brief dry eye but my vision was perfect and after being prescribed Restasis for a few months, everything went back to normal and I did not give it another thought. **Many years later, I began experiencing some eye pain and blurry vision.** After several months I decided to see a doctor, thinking there was an issue with the LASIK. I was diagnosed with dry eye in both eyes. After being treated by that doctor for several months with various treatments and no relief, he referred me to an eye doctor that specialized in dry eye."

Terri noticed her dry eye was impeding her quality of life, including reading, watching TV, and worse, driving. Not only had it become very painful, my vision continued to decline and I had issues with sunlight. After seeing this specialist for more than 6 months, I tried more steroid eye drops, Restasis, Theratears, eye patches, night masks, hot compresses and even a machine to add moisture to the air when I slept. Nothing helped and he said there wasn't anything else he could do. **Do you know how depressing this was for me?"**

He explained, "I dealt with the pain for a few more months and decided that this was ridiculous!" She said, "Why not go back to Price Vision Group. Dr. Price is one of the best eye doctors in the country and if he cannot help me perhaps I do just have to live with this condition."

At Dr. Price's office, I met Dr. Kelley, who confirmed the dry eye and developed a different treatment regimen. She mentioned the Foundation and explained that the practice was participating in a dry eye study and asked if I would be interested. At this point, what did I have to lose? My answer was a resounding 'you bet!' **The dry eye improved to the point that my vision returned to perfect. No more pain!** Since then, I am no longer taking the medication but I am maintaining my progress with Oasis tears and an eyewash."

What is Dry Eye?

Everyone may experience dry eyes from time to time. But for some, the condition can be chronic and very painful.



Tears have the very important job of keeping the surface of the eye moist and washing away dust and debris which can cause irritation or damage. This action of constant cleansing keeps the eye from getting scratched or injured and also protects the eye from bacterial or other types of infections. **When the eye no longer produces the tears it needs to correctly coat the eye, or when the tears are not the correct consistency and evaporate too quickly, dry eye occurs.** This temporary or sometimes chronic condition can make it difficult to perform daily activities and can be very painful.

DID YOU KNOW?

*Nearly 5 million Americans
50 years of age and older
have dry eye.*

The majority of people aged 65 or older experience dry eye. **Causes of dry eye include allergies, contact lens use, skin disease around the eyelids, pregnancy, exposure to irritants like chemicals or tobacco smoke, some eye surgery including LASIK, and more.** Many medications can cause dry eye as a side effect.

Symptoms of dry eye include red eyes, redness of the eye lids, foreign body sensation, itching, eye discomfort, blurry vision, and burning or stinging in the eye. While there is no "magic pill" to cure the condition, there are many treatment approaches from the more conservative warm compresses and artificial tears to physician-directed treatment options such as prescription eye drops and oral medication to punctal plugs or eyelid surgery.

If you are experiencing dry eye, it is important to seek treatment so it does not progress and causes severe ocular inflammation.

She summarized, **"my point is this: don't give up!"** She added, "I saw two doctors before I found one that could help. I came to realize that I had a real issue that wasn't going to improve unless I acted. Everyone is unique in what works for them, so keep trying and find the doctor that has the right treatment for you. You'll be glad you did."

OUR MISSION: TO GIVE PEOPLE BACK THE USE OF THEIR EYES

September Luncheon a Success

As we celebrate CRFA's 25th anniversary milestone in 2013, we honored an extraordinary Indiana philanthropist and painter, Nancy Noel at our annual luncheon in this September. The event was held at The Sanctuary in Zionsville, home to the remarkable collection of Ms. Noel's artwork. Our guests enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the Colours Restaurant while Nancy Noel discussed her connection with the eyes, which are the focal point in many of her pieces.



Dr. Price provided an in-depth research update covering the many studies currently underway, shared some exciting findings and told how he got started in research.

Bob Grimm shared his personal story. Featuring the "Through Our Eyes" Art Auction, thanks to the many sponsors and guests, the event raised more than \$13,000 for our research programs. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to make the event a success!

PHOTOS: Left: Dr. Price with Nancy Noel. Right: Dr. Price with Ms. Noel and Bob and Cindy Grimm, our honorary chairs and guests.



Happenings

Visit corneaforum.org to share your vision story!

GOLF OUTING

June 3, 2014

Cornea Classic Golf Outing—Please mark your calendar! Call us now at 317-814-2993 to reserve your spot or receive information. Many levels of sponsorship opportunities available!

LUNCHEON

Date TBD

Our Annual Luncheon during which Dr. Price provides an engaging presentation. Contact us for many 2014 sponsorship opportunities.

OPTOMETRIST SEMINAR

November 15, 2014

The Focus on Education seminar will be held at the Ritz Charles in Carmel, Indiana. Offering 7 hours of CE to attending optometrists with presentations from contemporary experts on today's topics.

Focus on Education Update 2013



Nearly 200 optometrists joined us on November 9th as they earned hours of continuing education (CE) credit at Focus on Education. Per Indiana requirements, optometrists must earn 20 hours of CE in order to renew their licenses by the deadline—April 1 of all even-numbered years. Those seeking to renew an Optometric Legend Drug Certificate must earn another 20 hours in the areas of ocular pharmacology therapeutics.

The Focus on Education seminar has been held annually since 1992 and has now reached thousands of doctors providing them with updates on a variety of topics including the latest treatments and surgical options. Learn more at Cornea.org, click Education.

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Price Vision Group welcomes new fellows

Buki Adebayo, M.D. (left) along with Evan Schoenberg, M.D. (right) have joined Price Vision Group as 2013-2014 Cornea Fellows.

Dr. Adebayo graduated from Cornell University and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. Dr. Schoenberg is a summa cum laude graduate of Vanderbilt University and Emory University School of Medicine. Both are very excited to learn the latest surgical techniques including cornea transplants from PVC surgeons Dr. Francis Price, Dr. Yuri McKee and Dr. Matthew Feng.



How We're Making an Impact with your Support

Breaking Research News by Marianne O. Price, Ph.D.



It is estimated that by 2015, the global population affected by dry eye will reach one billion. While it is not a frequent cause of blindness, it is one of the leading reasons why patients seek eye care. Symptoms of dry eye can have a devastating impact on one's quality of life including reduced work capacity and ability to perform activities such as reading and can even impact mental health.

The mission of the Foundation is to give people back the use of their eyes. While our focus is the advancement of cornea transplant techniques, we also investigate much more, including ways to treat dry eye syndrome. We've seen firsthand how debilitating this condition can be and have participated in many studies to approve new medications and treatments for this common problem.

We gained a new appreciation for just how common dry eyes occur, even in younger adults, when we conducted a large-scale survey to evaluate patient satisfaction with different types of vision correction. We were surprised to find that one out of four contact lens wearers between the ages of 18 and 60 years old reported that dry eyes limited their contact lens wearing time. Furthermore, about 15% of contact lens wearers and a similar percentage of those who had LASIK in the last year reported feelings of dry eyes anywhere from half of the time to all the time.

Tears are a critical part of eye health and are made of three layers: oil, water and mucous. The layers consist of proteins, electrolytes and vitamins that are critical to maintain the health of the cornea and to prevent infection from various dust and debris. Any factor that alters the chemistry of the tears can make them unhealthy resulting in irritating dry eye.

We personalize the treatment plan depending upon the source of the problem. First line treatments for dry eye symptoms include using artificial tears and avoiding contact lenses.

Problems specifically associated with the oil layer can be treated by taking vitamins that contain omega-3 fatty acids, avoiding eye makeup, using warm compresses on the eyelids to open up blocked oil glands, and cleansing the eyelids regularly. Sometimes, a small insect called Demodex has taken up residence in the eyelash hair follicles and we can apply treatments to eradicate it. If the eyes are drying out because the eyelids don't close properly, we can often correct that with eyelid surgery. To prevent tears from draining away so quickly, we can plug the tear ducts. We can also provide goggles that create a moisture chamber around the eyes. In addition, we have prescription eye drops that help reduce inflammation and alleviate dry eye symptoms.

Quick Tips to Avoid or Alleviate Dry Eye:

- Avoid exposing your eyes directly to flowing air such as with an air conditioner, direct heat from a hairdryer or car vent, or running outdoors.
- Wear glasses while going out into the sun.
- Use a humidifier if the air in your home is dry.
- Try to blink frequently which helps to keep the eyes lubricated.
- Remember the 20-20-20 rule. While reading, watching TV or working on a computer, look off into the distance every 20 minutes for 20 seconds at something at least 20 feet away.
- Consider a nutritional supplement such as flax seed or fish oil.

Despite the available treatment options, many people still suffer from dry eye symptoms. So we continue to seek better cures and are excited to be collaborating on innovative approaches that hold great promise.

If you suffer from dry eyes or know someone who does and would like to find out how you can participate in our clinical studies with new treatments, please call Clorissa at 317-814-2996 or email clorissaquillin@cornea.org.

Thank you, Justyn Hindersman

We are in the season of giving thanks, and we would like to recognize our wonderful volunteer Justyn Hindersman, who does so much for the Foundation.

At the September Luncheon, we presented Justyn with a small token of our gratitude for her hard work. She puts in many hours each month to ensure our records are up to date, assists with mailings, patient education packets, and much more!



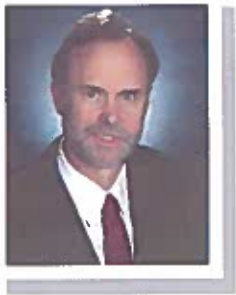
Justyn collects used eyeglasses in her efforts as a Delta Gamma's Service for Sight. If you have old eye glasses lying around, consider bringing them to your next Price Vision Group appointment to aid in her efforts. She has collected nearly 1,000 pairs of glasses! Thank you, Justyn, for all you do!



Cornea Research Foundation of America

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Ask Your Doctor By Dr. Francis Price, Jr.

Q: There are so many different eye drops on my supermarket shelves. What should I look for when selecting artificial tears? How do I know when I should seek a prescription dry eye medication?

A: "Dry eye" symptoms are actually quite common in the general population. They increase with age and are generally worse in women. Dr. Marianne Price and I will be reporting on the incidence of these symptoms in people after Lasik, wearing contact lenses, or just wearing glasses. As Marianne mentioned in her article it is important to blink frequently because if you do not, artificial tears will not absorb and will run off after a few seconds not producing much relief for dry eye.

When selecting drops, a good rule of thumb is if you only need them once or twice a day, select a multi-use preserved drop with a top which comes off and on so it can be reused over a few weeks. If you routinely need drop 3 to 4 times a day, a non-preserved drop in single dose vials would be best. This is because the preservatives are actually toxic chemicals placed in the bottles to kill bacteria and fungus so the drops can safely be reused. However as the eye gets dryer, the toxic chemicals are not washed away effectively causing irritation or damage to the ocular surface. Neither single use or preserved drops should be used more than 4 times a day, as they actually wash away some good things around the eyes. If non-preserved drops do not provide relief when used 4 times a day, prescription medication may be helpful. With severe dry eyes other treatments can help, but that could take the space of many more questions!

Thank you for your continued interest and support!

All donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible and support our sight-restoring research.