

# Dry eye treatment

AT ISSUE posed the following questions to a panel of experts:

**Do you recommend the use of omega fatty acids to treat dry eye? Why or why not?**

**NOEL A. ALPINS, MD**

## In combination with artificial tears

Managing dry eye has become an important part of postoperative refractive surgery patient management, as dry eye symptoms are among the most frequent complaints of patients who have undergone excimer laser surgery.

This dry eye phenomenon, which is most prevalent in the weeks immediately



Noel A. Alpkins

after the procedure, is principally due to disruption to the corneal innervation, which results in significant reduction of corneal sensation. This

leads to reduction in tear secretion from the suppression of the afferent loop, with a consequent increase in tear osmolarity and tear film instability. Similar pathogenesis applies for dry eye syndrome. Traditional treatments for dry eye range from hot

compresses, artificial eye drops, gels and steroids to surgical intervention with punctal occlusion and tarsorrhaphy, depending on the degree of dry eye conditions.

The most common treatment for dry eye is the use of artificial tears, which provides only instant and incomplete symptom relief. Use of active supplementary compounds such as the omega fatty acids is a recent option for dry eye treatment. Omegas are essential fatty acids, which are known to be deficient in our daily diets.

Supplementation of omegas works in multiple ways to relieve and treat the symptoms of dry eye. It improves the quality of meibomian gland secretion and stimulates aqueous tear secretion by repairing tear secretion in dysfunctional lacrimal glands and decreasing lacrimal gland apoptosis. Omegas also suppress inflammation in blepharitis and meibomitis, as seen in inflammation of joints in rheumatoid arthritis and rosacea.

Intake of omegas, together with artificial tears, will potentially be a successful dry eye treatment for maximizing effectiveness of the existing system. Further clinical trials are indicated to define the advisability of omegas intake and quantify the recommended dosages for this compound's more widespread use.

### For more information:

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