

## DRY EYE REGIMEN

Dry eye is a common problem affecting from five to twenty-five percent of the general population. Women may be more affected than men, and it most often begins to affect us after the age of forty. Dry eye is often related to collagen diseases such as arthritis, gall bladder problems, and endocrine dysfunctions such as diabetes or hormone imbalances. Frequently the reduction of all kinds of secretions such as saliva, sweat, and mucus membrane secretions are noticed as well as dryness of the eyes.

There is no cure for dry eye. Only palliative treatment can help to relieve the symptoms which can be very annoying. Sore, burning eyes and excessive tearing can be very disruptive to ones daily routine. All these symptoms come from insufficient rinsing out of daily grit and debris and from the lack of moisture for lubricating and wetting of the eye. These recommendations are designed to be added to your daily schedule, and they are cumulative in effect. It will take several days of regular use to notice any effect, and inversely it will take a day or so to notice the return of the symptoms if you discontinue to use the regimen. These two procedures make a dynamic combination to combat dry eye by treating not only the watery but also the oily deficits.

**Eye wash:** There are several brands of eye washes available over the counter at the drug department of grocery stores and pharmacies. Any brand will work fine as long as you have an eye cup for its proper use. Fill the cup full to the brim; lower your head down to immerse the eye completely in the eye cup while looking down--not up!; do not raise your head up; blink several times; look around-left, right, up, down; blink out of the cup; and repeat the procedure for the other eye. Toss the solution; rinse and dry the cup for the next use. Eye cups, like toothbrushes, are a personal item and should not be shared among family members.

**Make your own eyewash:** Once you have added the eye wash routine to your daily schedule, you may find purchasing the store brands of wash to be costly. To make your own follow these directions: 1 measuring teaspoon boric acid powder  
1 measuring cup water

Mix boric acid and water in a clean sauce pan, cover, and place pan on stove burner. Always boil your homemade solutions for five (5) minutes covered to avoid evaporation. Allow solution to cool to room temperature with the lid still on before using it. It is important to label your boric acid solution **POISON** and keep it out of reach of children. You may find it convenient to clip the Mr. Yuck symbol out of this page and tape it to your jar.

**Petroleum jelly:** At bedtime apply a small amount to the closed lids of each eye. Use only a very small amount or it will just smear off onto your pillow! You may even need to wipe off some before retiring for the night. Your body heat softens the jelly which then augments the oily layer of the natural tears. The regular use of the nighttime ointment carries over throughout the following day.

