

New Developments in Dry Eye Treatment

Dryness of the ocular surface can be the cause of a wide variety of eye complaints and interferes with the daily activities of about 10 million Americans. Including people with mild symptoms brings the total number to 20 to 30 million people making dry eye one of the most common ocular conditions diagnosed in the United States. Symptoms can range from occasional mild discomfort to severely blurred vision with pain and redness or even tearing at times. “The key to effectively treating dry eye currently lies with an accurate diagnosis, since dry eyes can be due to many different causes” says Dr. Steven Silverstein. Your eye doctor can now offer an expanded range of treatment options for dryness and are able to tailor treatment to a patient’s individual needs. Dr. Kevin Skelsey says, there are three main components of the tear film and a disturbance or deficiency in any one of the three can cause symptoms. For example, at Silverstein Eye Centers we have found patients with a deficiency of the watery component of the tear film can show great benefit from the topical drug Restasis (Allergan Inc.). Restasis is an eye drop that is applied twice daily and helps to increase natural tear production. However, if a patient has dysfunction of the oil glands embedded in the eyelid, the primary problem is lack of the oil layer and a medication such as Restasis will not help. According to Dr. Kevin Skelsey, these patients will “very often complain of tearing since they tend to over secrete the watery layer as their eyes attempt to compensate for the imbalance. Treatments must be aimed at improving the oil gland function to restore the natural balance.” Dry eye can be a very frustrating disease since patients will often try various treatment types with little success. Fortunately there are newer options and most patients can expect improvement with an accurate diagnosis and a comprehensive treatment plan.

– Dr. Kevin Skelsey, Silverstein Eye Centers 816-246-2111