

People with frequent symptoms should try Cromolux. Cromolux is an effective treatment but takes three weeks to work and must be used continuously to keep working.

Prescription eye drops

For more severe allergies your optometrist, GP or ophthalmologist can prescribe Patanol, non-steroidal agents such as Voltaren and Restasis, and steroid eye drops like Maxidex, Pred Forte and Predsol.

These treatments are very effective but can have side effects. If you're using steroid eye drops, you need to be under the care of an optometrist or ophthalmologist.



What about hayfever tablets?

Tablets are good for hayfever but unfortunately not for itchy eyes.

Could it be your eye drops?

Talk to your optometrist or ophthalmologist if your eyes get itchy when you use your glaucoma or antibiotic drops. You could be allergic to the medicine or the preservative in the bottle.

Avoid rubbing your eyes

Rubbing will make your itch worse. Use a cool compress instead.

Need more information?

This brochure can't cover all that is known about itchy eyes and allergic conjunctivitis. Don't hesitate to ask your optometrist or ophthalmologist for more information.

Itchy eyes?



Advice for people with
allergic conjunctivitis

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Introduction

Itchy eyes are a common problem. In most cases the itch is mild and settles quickly but some people have severe or prolonged itching that requires treatment.

Why do eyes itch?

Itching is part of an allergic reaction where the surface of the eye (conjunctiva) over-reacts to things in the air around us. That's why the condition is known as allergic conjunctivitis.

Common causes

There are many things that can cause an allergic reaction. Some people are allergic to just grass and tree pollens and only have itchy eyes at certain times of the year. Others are allergic to things like pets, house dust mites and moulds, and so suffer all year round.

Other symptoms

Some people also get red and watery eyes, eyelid swelling and sensitivity to light. In severe cases vision can be blurred.

Not just eyes

It's common for people with itchy eyes to also suffer from other allergic problems such as asthma, eczema, and hayfever. They may also react to certain foods and medicines.

Prevention

Sometimes it can help to avoid the problem in the first place. Things that may help include:

- Washing pollens, dust and fur off your face after work and play
- Staying indoors and closing windows when pollen and dust levels are high
- Delegating lawn mowing and gardening
- Removing plants such as silver birch
- Installing air conditioning and air filters
- Wearing goggles and wrap-around sunglasses
- Dusting with a damp cloth
- Fitting dust covers on pillows and mattresses
- Exposing furniture and bedding to sunlight to kill dust mites
- Removing or replacing carpet
- Choosing "low allergy" pets
- Moving to a drier house
- Avoiding parks, forests and gardens in spring time



Treatment

Simple measures

Rinse your eyes with artificial tears or solutions such as Optrex. Cold compresses can be very soothing; a wheat bag kept in a plastic bag in the fridge works well.

Non-prescription eye drops

If you only get symptoms from time to time, ask your optometrist or pharmacist for antihistamine eye drops such as Livostin or Zaditen. You can use the drops when your eyes get itchy or take them just before you do something that you know is likely to cause your eyes to itch.