

BLOCKED TEAR DUCT

Blocked tear duct is a condition in which the channel that normally carries tears from the eye to the nose is blocked. Although the obstruction is present at birth, symptoms may not appear until tear production increases (usually within the first month of life).

SYMPTOMS

- A continuously watery eye.
- Tears run down the face even without crying.
- During crying, the nostril on the blocked side remains dry.
- The eye is not red and the eyelid is not swollen (unless the soggy tissues become infected).

Blocked tear duct is a common condition, affecting 6 percent of newborns. Over 90 percent of blocked tear ducts open up spontaneously, on its own, by 12 months of age. If the obstruction lasts beyond 12 months of age, an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) can open it with a probe. Blocked tear ducts do not cause pain.

TREATMENT

Because of poor drainage, eyes with blocked tear ducts may become infected. The infected eye produces a yellow discharge. When the watery tear-like discharge becomes continuously thicker and yellow-green, infection may be beginning. Antibiotic ointment or drops may be necessary to control the infection.

Massage techniques can help speed up the opening of a blocked tear duct. Wash your hands well and keep fingernails trimmed short. Press your index finger against the inner corner of the eye and stroke downward along the side of the nose toward the nostril two or three times. Repeat the procedure two to four times a day, taking care to always wash your hands first.

CALL OUR OFFICE IF

- Any fever (rectal temperature > 100.4 F).
- Eyelids are swollen or reddened.
- Eye discharge is consistently yellow or green.

T:HPA Handouts/Blocked Tear Duct
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