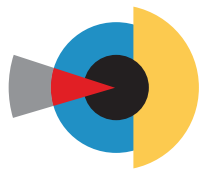


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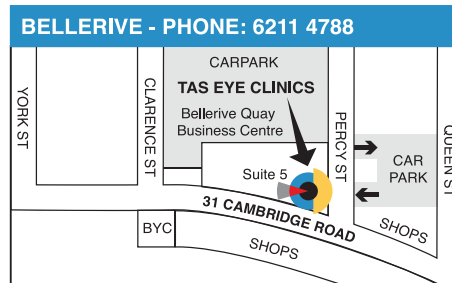
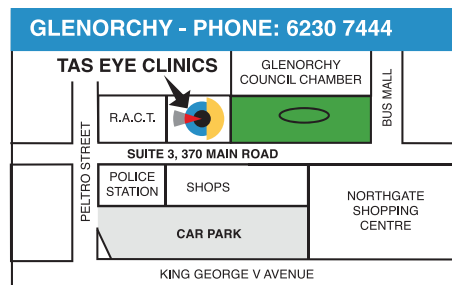
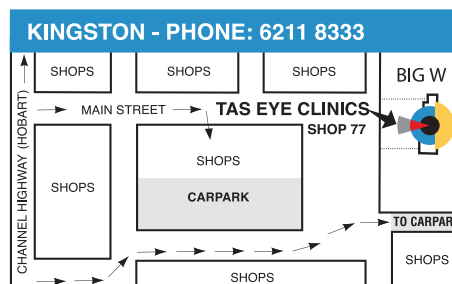
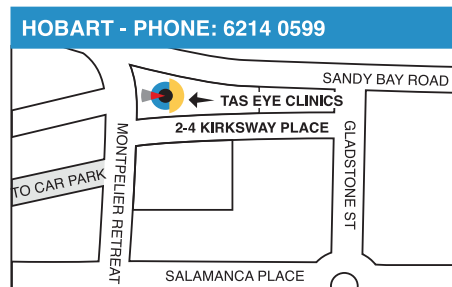
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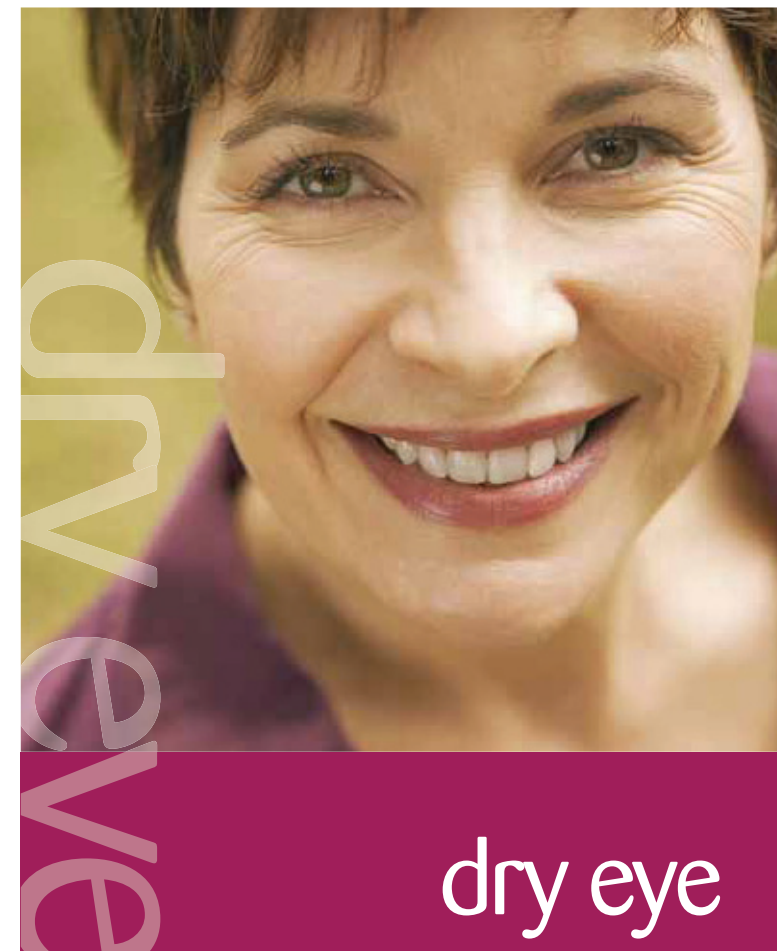
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Dry Eye Symptoms

The term "dry eye" suggests that the surface of the eye is relatively dry. This dryness occurs when the tear film, which is a thin film across the surface of our cornea, breaks. When we blink the tear film is normally stable for up to about 15 seconds, but if the tear film breaks quickly, then we refer to this as "dry eye".

The tear film is a three layered structure made up of a superficial layer of oil or meibomian secretion, a layer of mucous or mucocalyx, and in between, a watery component. The oil component comes from the edges of our lids or the meibomian glands. The mucous comes from little goblet cells all over the surface of our eye, and the water is secreted by the lacrimal gland. The tear film is something like a sandwich, with the water sandwiched in between the superficial oil layer and the mucous content next to the eye.

If there are breaks in the continuous oil film, water leaks out of the

sandwich and dry spots occur on the surface of the eye. This leads to reflex tearing. If the mucous layer is defective, the water cannot spread evenly across the surface of the eye and dry spots occur, leading to reflex tearing. These deficiencies produce the apparent contradiction that sometimes a dry eye can feel "watery".

Dry eye can be treated with eye drops, either in bottles or single-use vials.

- *Bottles contain preservatives, and they should not be used more than four to six times a day*

However, unpreserved single dose vials contain unpreserved drops that can be used extensively during the day. The absence of preservative means more frequent application will not damage the very sensitive mucous layer on the surface of the eye.

Dry eye syndrome can sometimes be associated with various diseases such as Sjögren's Syndrome, which can have general medical significance.

Post-menopausal women tend to have a much higher incidence of dry eye due to the relative lack of secretion from their lacrimal glands. This is a hormonal effect. People with inflammation of the lid margin edges also tend to get dry eye symptoms because of interference with the oil layer.

- *The surface of the eye can be thought of as an ecosystem*

Small alterations in the health of the surface of the eye can have profound affects and cause dry eye symptoms. If you think you have dry eyes, please consult your General Practitioner or Ophthalmologist for appropriate advice.