



MANHATTAN EYE

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Punctal Plugs

Punctal plugs, also called lacrimal plugs, are tiny devices used to treat dry eye syndrome. Dry eye syndrome is also known as chronic dry eyes.

How do they work?

The plugs are inserted into the tear duct opening (punctal opening) in the corner of your eye. This is the where tears drain through the back of your nose and throat. The plugs form a blockade so tears remain in your eyes and keep them lubricated.

How are they inserted?

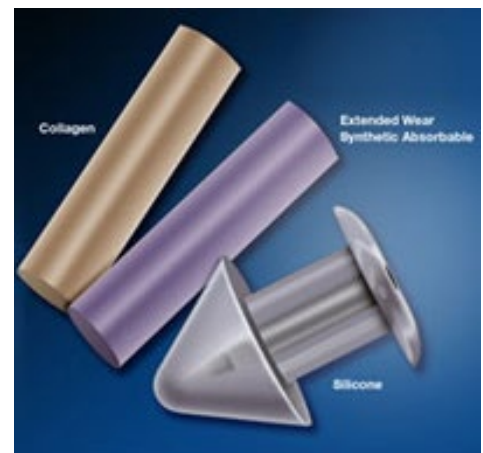
This noninvasive procedure requires nothing more than a few anesthetic eye drops. Your doctor will use a special instrument to insert the plugs. You might have some minor discomfort, but it's not painful. From beginning to end, the procedure should only take a few minutes. Once the plugs are in, you won't be able to feel them.

Recovery:

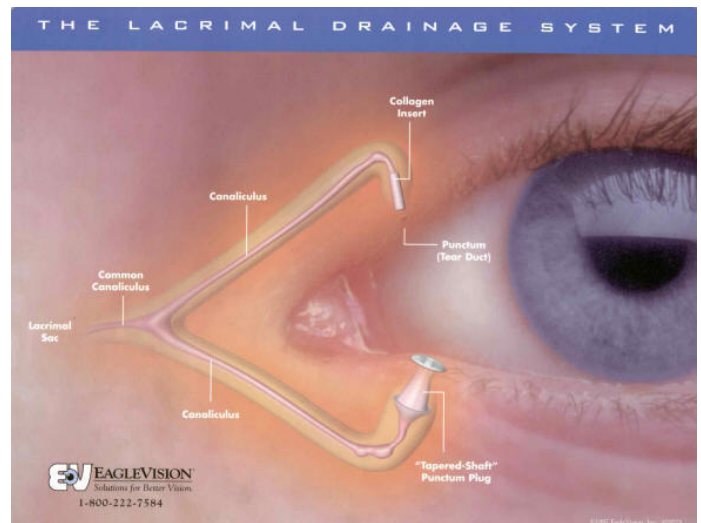
There is no recovery period and no restrictions. You should be able to resume normal activities, like driving, exercising, showering, immediately. You may feel a little irritation (similar to dry eye) immediately after the insertion, which will resolve in one day.

Types of Plug:

- Collagen (temporary) – dissolve after a few months
- Silicone (permanent) – meant to last for years



In the diagram to the right, the upper puncta has a temporary (collagen) plug, while the lower puncta has a permanent (silicone) plug:



Potential complications:

- There is a small chance that the plug dislodges. This is more likely to occur with the permanent (silicone) plugs. If it dislodges, we may need to replace the plug
- Punctal plugs can be removed as easily and quickly as they're put in. If the plug has moved out of position, your doctor might be able to flush it out with saline solution. If not, a small pair of forceps are all that's needed.
- Another possible complication is infection. This occurs mainly with the permanent plugs. Symptoms of infection include tenderness, redness, and discharge. Medication can clear up most cases of infection. If not, the plugs may have to be removed.

Outlook:

- There's no cure for dry eye, and it is a chronic condition that waxes and wanes. The goal of treatment is to ease symptoms.
- A 2015 report by the American Academy of Ophthalmology noted that punctal plugs improve symptoms of moderate dry eye that don't respond to topical lubrication. The report also concluded that serious complications are very rare.

<http://www.aaojournal.org/article/S0161-6420>