**Primary Care Management Guidelines**

**Dry Eyes**

These guidelines are to assist GPs to monitor and manage their patients in a primary care setting until clinical thresholds indicate that tertiary care is required. The clinical thresholds are defined in the guidelines, and may require diagnostic support from a local optometrist or ophthalmologist. Providing a detailed diagnostic report will assist with the triage of your referral into the most appropriate clinic, within clinically appropriate timeframes.

### **Assessment**

Ascertain the possible cause of dry eyes:

* Is the patient on any medication that may cause dry eyes?

This includes oral contraceptives, antidepressants, antihistamines, diuretics and betablockers.

* Is the patient of menopause age?

Common in women over 40 due to hormonal changes.

* Does the patient work in an environment with irritants such as dry air, chemical exposure or dust?
* Does the patient frequently use computers?

Extended times in front of a computer can often result in less frequent blinking.

### **Primary Care Management**

* Recommend ocular lubricants and/or lubricating ointments to relieve symptoms and review annually to monitor progress.
* Remind patients there is no cure for this condition and treatment is long term to provide relief of symptoms.

### **When to refer to the Eye and Ear**

* No relief of symptoms with regular use of lubricants
* Significant pain and discomfort
* Intermittent fluctuations of vision

### **Information to include on the referral letter**

* Best corrected vision (or with pinhole)
* Symptoms
* Duration of problem
* Lubricants/Ointments previously used

### **More information**

Return to our [Primary Care Management Guidelines](http://www.eyeandear.org.au/page/Health_Professionals/Referring_to_the_Eye_and_Ear/Pre-referral_guidelines)

Go to our [Referral Guidelines](http://www.eyeandear.org.au/page/Health_Professionals/Referring_to_the_Eye_and_Ear/Referrals)

[Factsheets](http://www.optometry.org.au/media/452259/nl_optometry_scope_of_practice_gp_2_page.pdf) for GPs on what services optometrists can provide, optometrists scope of practice and [how to find a local optometrist](http://www.optometry.org.au/vic/find-an-optometrist/).

Information on the [Australian College of Optometry](http://aco.org.au/) and services they provide.