

## DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE DRY EYE?

By Nigel Monk, Contact Lens Optician associated with CMEC

I have been involved with CMEC in their Contact Lens department for over 15 years now and have enjoyed fitting patients with the most advanced materials and designs.

Consequently many patients have experienced all day comfort and multi-focal correction with their contact lenses as an alternative to their spectacles. (No you are not too old to give it a go)

On a daily basis I assess tear quality on all my patients be they new to contact lens wear or returning "old" patients for their annual check-up.

It is evident that our quality of tears is being compromised by many factors some of which we can control and some of which we cannot.

Many of us are guilty of punishing our delicate tear physiology by our lifestyle. With prolonged use of computers, television and mobiles, our essential blink action to disperse the tear film across the cornea is severely reduced when concentrating on these devices.

Coupled with Environmental factors (car and industrial pollution), Smoking, Alcohol and preservatives in food and medicine it is not surprising that Dry Eye often results.

Early Dry Eye symptoms are often manageable by regular eye lubrication but as the condition worsens (Dry Eye is often chronic) many of the so called "comfort drops" will exacerbate the problem.

Moderate to severe Dry Eye mismanaged is unpleasant, most definitely progressive and permanently destructive to ocular cells. Furthermore, the different classifications of Dry Eye demand different treatments, so correct diagnosis is essential.

My in depth study of Dry Eye was initially undertaken to help my contact lens patients regain the all-day comfort they once had and the success I had in "turning them round" gave me the confidence to tackle the more advanced Dry Eye patient with severe symptoms.

The chances are that if you think you have a Dry Eye condition then you most probable do. Once this is diagnosed correctly then a month of treatment will usually show encouraging signs of improvement.

Accurate diagnosis of Dry Eye is only possible by an experienced optician / ophthalmologist examining the cornea, lids and tear film with a medical instrument known as a Slit Lamp Biomicroscope. This instrument is not found in your GP's practice and he or she will therefore not be able to give the correct diagnosis.

CMEC now have a Dry Eye Clinic to Diagnose and give the correct course of treatment for most forms of Dry Eye. However, there is a very rare Dry Eye condition which would need specialist medical intervention and supervision.