

## Guidance on the use of eye lubricants for dry eye conditions in primary care

**NHS England has issued guidance which recommends that eye lubricants are not routinely prescribed in primary care for patients with mild to moderate dry eyes.**

**Patients who are able to self-care should purchase these items from a pharmacy or other supplier.**

**Red flags:** Refer patients immediately if acute glaucoma, keratitis, or iritis is suspected e.g. moderate-to-severe eye pain, photophobia, marked redness in one eye only or reduced visual acuity.

Feelings of dryness, grittiness, or soreness in both eyes, which worsen through the day. May get 'tired eyes' when reading or watching TV.

Trial each product for 4-6 weeks before moving to more viscous product (1 → 2 → 3)

### Standard Formulation drops/gel

1. **Hypromellose 0.3% or 0.5%**  
(~£1/10ml – 1 month expiry)  
**Note – 0.5% drops are slightly more viscous and cheaper.**
2. **Clinitas® Carbomer 0.2% eye gel**  
(£1.50 per tube) 1 month expiry
3. **Evlove® Carmellose 0.5%**  
(£4.99/10ml – 3 month expiry)

**Preservative free formulation:** Consider if the person is: intolerant of preservative in tear supplements; has moderate to severe dry eye disease requiring drops *more than* 4 times per day; is using multiple preserved topical medications; or uses soft or hybrid contact lens.

1. **Evolve® Hypromellose 0.3%**  
(£1.98/10ml – 3 month expiry)
2. **Evolve® Carmellose 0.5%**  
(£4.99/10ml – 3 month expiry)
3. **Evolve® Hyaluronate 0.2%**  
(£5.99/10ml – 3 month expiry) OR

**Eye Ointments (high viscosity), for use at night in addition to day time treatment**

**Hylo-Night® (formerly known as Vita-Pos) ointment, preservative free.** (£2.75/5g 6 month expiry)  
 OR  
**Xailin Night Ointment, preservative free** (£2.51/5g 2 month expiry)

NB: Even the thicker viscosity drops only blur the vision for a minute. The night time ointment only blurs the vision slightly.

### Refer or obtain specialist advice if:

- Symptoms are uncontrolled despite appropriate treatment for about 4 weeks.
- Diagnosis requires specialist assessment (apply a lower threshold for obtaining specialist advice for younger people).
- Vision deteriorates.
- Ulcers or other signs of corneal damage occur.
- Associated disease requires specialist management (e.g. Sjögren's syndrome or eyelid deformities).

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