

Information about

Eye Care for Patients with Facial Nerve Palsy

What is Facial Nerve Palsy?

The **facial nerve** is the nerve responsible for movement of the muscles of the face, including the mouth, and eyelids. There are two facial nerves, one on the right and one on the left, and each is responsible for the muscles on their side of the face. If you have damage to one of your facial nerves, the muscles on that side of the face will be difficult to move. This can result in a 'drooping' or 'sagging' appearance to that side of your face. This is known as **Facial Nerve Palsy**.

Eye Care

If you have facial nerve palsy you will have difficulty closing your eyelids, which means you cannot fully close your eye on the affected side. This can result in your eye becoming dry and irritated as your tears cannot stay on the eye's surface to keep it lubricated. Not being able to close your eyelids can also lead to a dry eye and leave it unprotected from irritants such as dust or other debris. If severe drying or damage occurs, your vision can be at risk, **so it is important to protect your eye if you have a facial nerve palsy**.

Symptoms of a dry eye include pain or discomfort in the eye along with redness, excessive watering and blurred vision.

To prevent symptoms and protect your eye and vision, it is important to keep the surface of the eye moist and prevent it from drying.

You should regularly check your eye in the mirror for any sign of redness or debris on the eye, as you may not be able to feel this.

Eye Care Advice

General (non-pharmacological) measures to protect your eye

- **Glasses, sunglasses, or goggles** provide protection to the eye if you have difficulty with blinking. They also provide barrier protection from debris that can land on the eye such as dust.
- You can use **medical tape** to keep your eyelids closed **at night**.

- Please be careful when applying tape so that it doesn't slip and cause an eye injury.
- When applying tape (soft medical tape): Use the index finger of one hand to keep the eye closed. Apply the tape, covering both eye lids, starting near the nose and slowly press the tape working towards the outside (away from the nose) in a horizontal line.
- Eye patches will also help protect your eye at night and during the day.
- Try to avoid prolonged periods of watching television or a computer screen (prolonged periods of screen time can reduce blinking).

Eye drops and ointment (pharmacological)

- You can use **eye drops** to help lubricate the eye throughout the day.
- We recommend using a thicker eye **ointment at night**. This will blur your vision so you should only apply it before going to sleep at night.

If you have any discomfort when using eye drops or ointments please try a different brand. Ideally, it would be best to use **preservative free eye drops and ointments** as long term use of eye drops and ointments containing preservatives can lead to irritation of the eye.

Further advice

If your discomfort continues, your eye becomes red or there is a change to your vision despite changing your eye drops, then please speak to your GP, optician, or an ophthalmologist.

Review Date: July 2026