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Polyvinyl alcohol for dry eyes (Liquifilm Tears, Sno Tears)

Polyvinyl alcohol eye drops act as artificial tears. They make dry eyes feel more comfortable.

Use the drops three or four times a day, or more often if required.

If your vision becomes blurred for a short while after using the drops, do not drive until you can see clearly again.

About polyvinyl alcohol eye drops

Type of medicine	Eye lubricant
Used for	Dry eyes
Also called	Liquifilm Tears®; Refresh® Ophthalmic; Sno Tears®
Available as	Eye drops and single-use units

Polyvinyl alcohol eye drops are also known as 'artificial tears'. [They are used to relieve eye dryness and soreness](#), particularly where the dryness is caused by a reduced flow of tears. They moisten, soothe and lubricate the surface of your eye, making it feel more comfortable.

The drops are available on prescription, or you can buy them without a prescription at a pharmacy.

Before using polyvinyl alcohol

To make sure this is the right treatment for you, before you start using the eye drops it is important that your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- If you wear soft contact lenses.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a preservative in eye drops.

How to use polyvinyl alcohol eye drops

1. Wash your hands well before you use the drops.
2. Remove the cap from the bottle (or the tip of the unit if you are using a single-use dose unit).
3. Tilt your head back a little and pull the lower lid of your eye downwards to form a pocket.
4. Hold the bottle (or single-use dose unit) upside down near to your eye. Try not to touch your eye as you do this.
5. Apply enough pressure to release one drop into your eye. Only use a second drop if the first drop missed going into your eye.
6. Close your eye for a minute or two, and press gently on the side of your nose where the corner of your eye meets your nose. This helps to stop the drop from draining away and keeps it in your eye.
7. Repeat the process in your other eye if you have been told to use the drops in both eyes.
8. Replace the cap (or if you are using a single-use dose unit, throw the used unit away).

Getting the most from your treatment

- Before you start using the eye drops, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet supplied with the pack. It will give you more information about using the drops and will provide a full list of the side-effects which you may experience.

- Use one drop into the eye (or eyes) affected by dryness. Many people find it is sufficient to use the drops three or four times a day, but you can use the drops more frequently if your eyes are very dry. If the drops have been prescribed for you then follow the directions given by your doctor.
- Please take care that the dropper doesn't touch your eye, your fingers, or any other surface. This could contaminate the drops left in the bottle.
- If you forget to use the drops at your 'usual' time, do not worry, just put them in when you remember. Do not 'double up' the number of drops you use to make up for forgetting to use them.
- When first put in, eye drops may cause blurred vision. This should quickly clear. Make sure you can see clearly again before you drive, or before you use tools or machines.
- If you are using any other eye drops or ointments, leave about ten minutes between applying each one. It is usually recommended that you use the polyvinyl alcohol drops last. This is so that the drops stay in contact with your eye and lubricate it for as long as possible.
- Do not wear soft contact lenses while you are using the drops unless your doctor or pharmacist has advised you otherwise. This is because there is a preservative in bottles of polyvinyl alcohol eye drops which can affect soft contact lenses. There is no preservative in the single-use units of Liquifilm Tears®.

Can polyvinyl alcohol eye drops cause problems?

The eye drops can occasionally cause mild eye irritation or redness, but this usually soon passes and not everyone will experience it. If you experience any other eye problems, especially if you think they may be due to the drops, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

How to store polyvinyl alcohol eye drops

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

- Most eye drops in bottles only keep for four weeks once the container has been opened, so do not use the drops if the bottle has been open for longer than this. This helps to reduce the risk of eye infection.
- Single-dose units should be used as soon as they are opened. Do not store an opened unit to use later. This is because the units do not contain any preservative.

Important information about all medicines

Make sure that the person prescribing this medicine knows about any other medicines that you are using. This includes medicines you buy and herbal and homeopathic medicines.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are using.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you suspect that someone might have swallowed some of this medicine, contact your local accident and emergency department for advice.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Report suspected side effects to medicines, vaccines, e-cigarettes, medical device incidents, defective or falsified (fake) products to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to ensure safe and effective use.

Further reading

- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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