

Waking Up the Nation,
One Reader at a Time...

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

Seven Simple Tips for Dry Eyes and Mouth



by Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum

Dry eyes and mouth can have many causes. It is a common feature of CFS and fibromyalgia, and it often responds to simple nutritional support. In other cases, it may reflect autoimmune conditions such as Sjogren's Syndrome, which knocked Venus Williams out of this year's U.S. Open tennis championship — a consequence I think may have been avoidable. Fortunately for her, she changed her diet and was able to get back on the tour!

Have you ever suffered from dry eyes and mouth? Dry eyes and mouth are also very common in CFS and fibromyalgia, and fortunately in most cases this is not associated with Sjogren's (or damage that may have somehow occurred to the tear glands or salivary glands). It therefore often can be resolved by following the SHINE protocol.

Whether your dry eyes and mouth are just from fibromyalgia, or whether you have Sjogren's or other causes, here are 7 simple tips that can be very helpful.

Seven Treatment Tips Three Key Oils

Just like oil lubricates your car, dietary oils can help lubricate your body. Three key oils are especially important for dry eyes:

Fish oil. Fish oil is rich in the essential fatty acids EPA and DHA, which studies show help with dry eyes.³ Eat a portion of oil-rich salmon or tuna daily. Or supplement your diet with VEC-TOMEGA (by EuroPharma). It supplies all the essential fatty acids you need in 1 to 2 tablets a day (instead of the 8 to 16 tablets needed with most other fish oils).

Sea Buckthorn Oil. The berries from this cold weather shrub contain a special essential fatty acid called Omega 7 (along with other helpful oils). Studies show that this little-known but remarkable nutrient is very effective at improving lubrication throughout the body — helping remedy dry eyes, dry mouth, and even vaginal dryness, while providing the bowel with protection from the dryness of

Sjogren's.^{4,5,6} I've found that the product Hydra-7 (by EuroPharma) is an excellent source of Sea Buckthorn Oil (take 2,000 mg a day). For those with significant dry eye and mouth problems, this special oil can be a Godsend! A fringe benefit? Stomach, bladder and vaginal symptoms can also improve. Give it 6 weeks to work and 4 months to see the optimal effect (though the benefits often start within a week)

Evening Primrose oil (or borage oil). In one study, combining this oil with vitamin B6 and vitamin C improved dry eye symptoms in 76% of study participants⁷ (recommended dose 3,000 mg a day). If cost is an issue, you can substitute borage oil, which is less expensive. This oil also helps PMS as well, but is not anywhere near as important as the other

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two oils for dry mouth and eyes.

Other Nutrients

High-dose B-complex vitamin (50 mg) and magnesium (200 mg). You'll find those dosages in the Energy Revitalization System vitamin powder (by Enzymatic Therapy).

Drops, Drink and Gum

Suck on sugar-free lemon drops or drink sugar-free lemonade (sweetened with Stevia, Truvia or PureVia). The lemon in drops or lemonade stimulates saliva production. But notice I said sugar-free! Saliva protects against cavities, so sucking on cavity-causing sweets when you have dry mouth is a good way to wind up at your dentist's with a mouthful of holey teeth!

Chew sugar-free chewing gum. This actually helps protect against cavities. An additional bonus is that it also stimulates bowel function (peristalsis), which is decreased in Sjogren's, causing bowel problems of all kinds. In fact, studies show that simply chewing gum immediately after waking up from abdominal surgery

(which puts the bowels to sleep) results in restoring bowel function more quickly, sometimes shaving several days off the average hospital stay.⁸

Watch your fibromyalgia medications. Many of the medications used to treat fibromyalgia (especially Elavil/amitriptyline) can also worsen the dry mouth commonly seen in FMS (see Treating Dry Eyes and Dry Mouth for a more detailed list).

More Background on Sjogren's

In an autoimmune disease, the immune system mistakenly identifies a part of the body as "foreign" and attacks it. In rheumatoid arthritis, for example, the joints are attacked. In multiple sclerosis, it's the outer coverings of nerves. And in Sjogren's Syndrome — which affects more than 4 million Americans, 9 out of 10 of them women — the immune system attacks the tear glands and salivary glands.

The result? Dry eyes and mouth — which doctors also call "Sicca Syndrome," whether it occurs because of Sjogren's, fibromyalgia, or everyday life. But Sjogren's can also cause

widespread dryness in the body, producing symptoms like difficulty breathing, digestive upset, and poor bowel function.

The Connection to Fibromyalgia

For those with autoimmune illnesses such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and Sjogren's, it's critical to understand that it's common for any of these to cause a secondary fibromyalgia. If all the symptoms are blamed on Sjogren's, then the fibromyalgia, which is very treatable,^{1,2} may be missed.

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