

The watering eye

Orbit, Lacrimal and Oculoplasty services

Joseph Speciality Eye Clinic and Surgical Centre, Thiruverkadu.

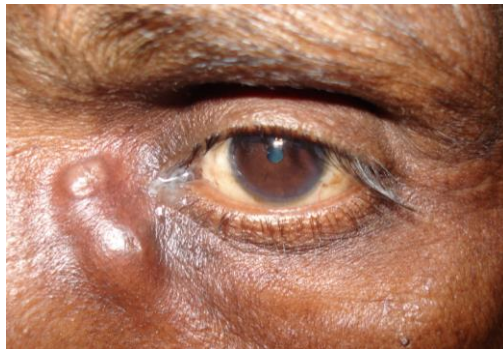
The watering eye

There are glands around the eye which produce tears. Tears help wash, clean and lubricate the front portion of the eyeball. Thus tears are important in the maintenance of a healthy eye. Tears normally drain through a small drain hole (also called punctum) found on the edge of the eyelid towards the nose. The drain hole leads to a fine tube and sac which eventually opens into the nose via a tube called nasolacrimal duct. These channels for tear drainage are called the *Lacrimal Drainage System*

What causes the eyes to water?

- An abnormal eyelid position can result in the punctum no longer being able to collect the tears which can cause watering.
- Inflammation of the eyelid margins
- A narrowing of the drain hole. This is called punctual stenosis
- A blockage of the tear drainage system. It is possible to check for this by syringing salt water (saline) through the tear ducts. If there is no blockage in the drainage system, the salt water can be tasted in the throat. This is a simple procedure and is done as an outpatient procedure.

Blocked nasolacrimal duct giving rise to a bulge in the lacrimal sac area



How can watering eye be treated?

Treatment depends on the cause of watering.

- Abnormal positions of lids can be corrected by daycare surgical procedures.
- Inflammation of the eyelids can be treated by lid hygiene and topical medication
- Punctal stenosis can be treated by enlarging the tear drainage hole. This is called punctoplasty
- A blocked nasolacrimal duct can be overcome by an operation called **Dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR)** where a bypass is created between the lacrimal sac and the nose, to facilitate the drainage of tears. This surgery can be done either through the skin or the nose under local or general anaesthesia. It is important not to blow your nose for a week after surgery.
- In an elderly patient, the lacrimal sac can just be removed without the bypass. It's a simpler surgical procedure called **Dacryocystectomy** often done under local anaesthesia.

Tearing in the newborn

A newborn may present with a wet eye. Occasionally there may be discharge in the eye. This could be either due to infection or block in the nasolacrimal duct. This blockage usually opens up within 4 to 6 weeks after birth. Massaging the inner corner of the eyelids may hasten the opening of the blockage. However, if the tearing persists despite massage, **probing** can be done. This procedure is done under general anaesthesia. Probing is successful when done before 4 years of age. Persistent tearing despite probing would require **DCR**.

This is a patient information leaflet. For enquiries, do not hesitate to contact Joseph Speciality Eye Clinic and Surgical Centre at 9600096585 , 04426801798.