Ep 594: Dry Eyes in the Digital Age: Causes & Natural Relief with Dr. Pam Theriot Transcript

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Podcast intro and guest introduction

Welcome to the Health Fix Podcast where health junkies get their weekly fix of tips, tools and techniques to have limitless energy, sharp minds and fit physiques for life.

And Dr. Pam has a story of her own that she'll get into on the podcast, but she has Ted Talk that talks all about it and she's won awards for it. So this podcast is for anyone who's getting older and noticing that their eyes are getting a little dry.

And Doctor Pam's gonna talk all of about some solutions and like I said, there's a test in here to see how bad it is. Stay tuned for that. Let's jump in and introduce you to Dr Pam Terrio.

Dr. Pam Theriault, welcome to the Health Fix Podcast. Thanks Janine, it was so good to be here. I'm excited to talk about dry eyes because it is something that I've noticed in myself as I have gotten older and I noticed that a lot of my patients in that 35 to 55 inch range, they're like, My eyes just don't feel the same or we hear a lot about the sandpaper eyes and all that kind of stuff.

So I'm guessing this is something you see every day in the optometry world.

Dry eye basics and screen-time causes

Absolutely, every single day. It's becoming more and more prevalent and that has a lots to do with the amount of time we spend on our screens. Isn't that something?

Yeah, I heard my grandma talking about dry eye, but you know, she was in her 80s by the time I was hearing things, and I'm pretty sure she never looked at a computer.

In her time frame, in our age, by that time she had passed, computers were just starting to be a thing. Probably had one of those big dinosaur gateway computers in my house back in those days.

But we're on them, you right? Our phones are our computers, we have iPads, what we are doing right now, sitting in front of the computer, Have you found that certain filters and things help or do you feel like it's really just getting the time off of them?

Right. Going to back up just a little bit. It used to be 10 years ago, our dry eye patients were typical middle-aged women. Women in that perimenopause area of time hitting 40 and their tear production was just slowing down because of hormonal changes.

So we didn't have very many male dry-eye patients. and we didn't have them under the age of 40. And fast forward past COVID, and now we can see the prevalence of our dry eye patients in our like 15 to 30 year old range is equivalent male to female.

That's exactly because everybody across the board is spending all that time on their digital devices. Those 30-year-olds are really the generation that was born with a cell phone in their hand.

They got their cell phones when they were in the strollers at the age of two. You know, they're hanging on a mom's cell-phone and they get their iPad.

Those current 30-year-olds that were having more of that digital device all the time. Whereas the older of us, you

know, we didn't get them until we were already adults.

So that's big changes happening. We're seeing more dry eye in men and the filters really, really aren't cutting it. And we can talk about different layers of light.

If we're talking about yellow light to block the blue or red light, At nighttime, even using these filters, it's not affecting the dryness of our eyes.

And that's specifically because we need to blink our eye while we are moving throughout our day. If you and I were sitting across the table from each other, sipping a cup of tea, drinking some water, and having a conversation, we would blink about 20 times a minute.

In this screen world that we're living in, you know, I'm curious to see how you're reacting to me, and so I am staring at you in the screen, And we blink about a third as much, so about seven times a minute on a screen.

That also happens if you were reading a book, You'd blink a little bit less, but if were, if You were Reading a paper book you'd Blink more than you would if your reading on A Kindle or on the Screen.

So the screen specifically really reduces the amount of time we're blinking. I had no idea about that. Like the blinking thing, I mean, it makes sense.

It makes perfect sense and I know like days that I've been on the computer longer, my eyes feel worse by the end of the day. But you know, a lot of us and myself included, is it eye strain?

Maybe, but I didn't think about the blink. Right. So some of it could be eye strain because our eyes really weren't meant to focus up close all day long.

We were designed to be hunters and gatherers and be outdoors in the fields. And so our vision, the least resistance of being able to see is looking far away.

That's how our eye's focused the easiest, best, least amount of energy and input.

Blinking, tears, and artificial tear limits

is seeing far away. When we focus up close, our eyes have to come together to point at the same thing at this same time, and they have focus. The lens inside of our eye changes so that we can see up-close.

So two things have happen energetically and then, as I said, we just tend to blink less often, which is coating the front surface of your eyes with lubricants, or lubricating tears, to keep that mucous membrane moist and ready to see.

Hmm. So of course you got something kind of turning in my head about the lubricating component going on and the tears. You know, I think a lot of people, they will think, okay, if dry as I just put the artificial tears in, and I'm good to go, you know.

Sometimes as, as mentioned, like fatty acids, we'll think okay we need to increase that. Is there like an exercise we can do too of say we do have to be on the computer for work that we like blink in between or we could help like with the production naturally so we don't have Right, so artificial tears have that moniker that it's a tear.

There's really only like four components in a good artificial tear, right? It lubricates and just kind of adds some moisture to the eye, but our natural tears So they have anti-inflammatories, growth factors, things that are going to help fight infection.

So our natural tears have no comparison to the artificial ones that we're dumping in. That's number one. Can add some lubricating drops to your eyes to give yourself that moisture.

They may help, they usually don't last as long as we'd like them to, even the ones have oil in the Artificial Tear. The better idea than is to either support our bodies to make healthy tears, number one, and number two, to blink our eyes.

on purpose with regularity to lubricate the front of our eye. It's going to close the eye, right, and then our tears spread out from our eyelids across the surface of the eyelid.

But some oil expresses from the eyelids as they come together, just a little bit of oil comes out, spreads across our surface and protects our tear from dehydrating into the air.

And so doing some timed blinking or on a schedule, okay, I'm going to finish this one document and then I'll close my eyes for a few seconds. I am going squeeze them hard, get those oils to come out, do three or four of those in a row, and I will get back to work again.

So really being mindful of taking those breaks. And there's some apps that you could add to your computer or your cell phone that could be a reminder.

But saying to yourself, okay, I'm going to finish this one thing, and then I'll read this paragraph, then blink three times, go back and read the next paragraph.

Things like that can really make a better difference than just hydrating with artificial tears. I love it when it's free, of course, right? Love it, when we can use our own natural resources.

So now, I'm going to blink and keep myself blinking. I wonder if it is also why I've noticed when folks who have really dry eyes, it looks like their body is trying to blinks more.

Is the body naturally prone to try to overcome the dry eye by triggering a blinking reflex? Absolutely. So when our eyes dry out, our vision will get fuzzy.

And so automatically you'll blink the eyes to try to refresh the tear film, get a new coating over the front surface of the eye. It's also irritating.

You might feel that stinging and burning starting to set in, and you will start to blink to clear that. Sometimes it works, sometimes you do it too many times and there's just not enough reservoir reserve there to to Cook the front surface of the eyes.

Oh my goodness. Yeah. It's, you know, it's one of those things that it has been a phenomenon in my office where, we'll try a supplement that has the fatty acids.

We'll have something with antioxidants. You know we will try those kinds of things, but I never knew that you could just blink more and hold the eye and do that to help.

promote the, you know, the lubric, like 2000, I'm like still blown away that there's over 2000 things in your eye drop, in like your actual eye. Yeah, your natural tears, they are, are perfectly balanced to keep our eyes healthy.

Inflammation, hydration, and detox support

So they bring all those anti-inflammatories to the front surface. They fight infection, They hydrate and heal. so our natural tiers are really the way to go.

By giving your body the building blocks of those healthy tiers, like using an omega-3 fatty acid supplement, can support those health tier production.

Keeping our patients hydrated, I know you talk a lot about hydration and getting enough water into our bodies. If we don't have any water we can't make tears as even with those 2,000 components tears are still 70 to 80 percent

liquid.

So we really need to make sure we're well hydrated enough and the omega-3s will support that oily layer that'll coat the tears and keep it from dehydrating into the air.

The main driver of dry eye disease is inflammation. And so as you're detoxing, you are decreasing levels of inflammation in the body, which could really improve not only the amount of tears that you re creating, but the quality of those tears.

Our tears have both pro and anti-inflammatory cytokines in them, and I heard you talk about cytOKines. in your detox episode. So having more of those anti-inflammatory sick kinds in our tear film will bring down the levels of inflammation on the front surface of our eyes and could significantly make the tear-film healthier to us, more supportive to our eye health and our vision.

But in general, I was also thinking about the idea of detox in the things that we're putting in on and around our own eyes themselves. So if we take this time in January to kind of go through the things that we're using on our faces and in our eyes, we can remove toxins from those products.

So the first thing that I can think of would be artificial tears. So we were just talking about that. You're sitting in front of your digital device and you want to add some moisture to it.

What about our artificial tiers? Are you using one that's in a bottle and is preserved? Then you're putting a toxin in your eye every time you add the artificial tear, right?

Yeah, that makes sense. So what do you have like a favorite artificial tear? Is there one that's not toxic? So there's a ton of them that are preservative free these days.

And when you go to the artificial tier aisle at the pharmacy or the grocery store, just make sure you're looking for the words preservatives free. It used to be that they came in little individual vials.

You broke the top off and used the tear in the vial. But now they've gotten a little bit more fancy with their packaging and you can get a bottle of preservative free and a new multiple dispense bottle, but it's still no preservatives in it.

So just make sure you're checking the label. Okay. Now you had mentioned other things that go around the eyes, like makeup and those kinds of things. How would those cause dry eyes?

And do explain, because I think a lot of people might be thinking, I know that I personally use different types of eyeliners that just flared up my eyes.

And same thing with some of the mascaras too. Absolutely. The toxins that are in our makeup are just astronomical. If we lived in Europe, the European Union bans like 1,300 different ingredients from their personal care items.

But here in the U. S., the laws are not as strict. About three years ago, we only had 13, one, three ingredients that were banned from our personal-care products.

And in 2024, they came out with the Modernization of Cosmetics Reform Act. Mokra. It was presented in 2024 and so they're starting to tighten down on the ingredients that can be included in our makeup.

Makeup, especially as women, we've been wearing eye makeup probably since we were teenagers. We're putting it on maybe first thing in the morning before we get to the office.

Were taking it off the last of the day. as we're getting into the shower or into bed. So you're wearing that makeup for 14, 16 hours a day for five, seven days a week for decades upon decades.

Having toxic ingredients in our cosmetics doesn't make a difference between what you wore on New Year's Eve and the next morning.

Makeup, fragrances, and eye irritants

But it's this year after year, after a year of putting the same old mascara on that is filled with parabens or phthalates or a toxic preservative and leaving it on your eyes.

14 to 16 hours a day. I have prepared for your audience a makeup remover list and at the bottom of the makeup list I had a whole list of my favorite cosmetic products, mascaras, eyeliners, and eyeshadows that are toxin free and safe to use for sensitive eyes.

So we'll link that in the show notes so that everyone can download that guide. I give it out to all of my patients to make sure, number one, if we're putting makeup on our faces, we got to remove it before we go to bed.

So many reasons for that, but as well as nice brands that are going to help our eyes feel more comfortable throughout the day and not give you that stinging and burning.

It's so wild to think, you know, I look at it and I've heard from some of my patients, but also I notice it in myself that even just certain like makeup remover wipes or even certain scents, like if they're synthetic, say there's a diffuser by me or something like that, will also notice that that seems to affect my eye.

Does that go along with the dry eye component too? Absolutely. The problem with makeup remover wipes in general when they're packaged in those plastic, like a baby wipe, multiple in the same container, those are preserved with alcohol.

alcohol. And now you're talking about rubbing alcohol right on the front surface of your eye. It's horrible. So in my makeup remover list, I have some that are individually packaged and they don't contain alcohol, so if you love having those makeup-remover wipes on-the-go, that makes sense.

I do have one in there. But scents and fragrances are also very toxic to the ocular surface, even if it's a natural scent, you know, putting some lavender in could be irritating to the eyes, depending on how sensitive patients are or what the percentage of that scent is in the packaging.

But in general, fragrances can be I absolutely have found that myself and I love talking about on the podcast. And I think a lot of folks wear some strong scents or they have like Febreze in their home.

They still have the Glade plugins and all those different things. I just can't help but think that the eyes having mucosal tissue, I mean, it's just sensitive.

Yes, you're exactly right. And everyone's obsessed these days with not only us smelling good, but our home smelling and smelling clean. And so everywhere you go, there's someone's burning a candle or having one of those plugins.

So everything is scented. Now, beyond dry eyes, looking at like, okay, we have just dries from screens, what other conditions are there like say autoimmune kind of conditions, thyroid conditions things of that nature, that you can kind help folks like Say they're blinking more, they are trying to work on things, or taking a fatty acid antioxidant formula, and things aren't changing.

What should they be looking into? What they should be telling their eye doctors, their optometrists? You know, what should the be saying to try to get a little bit more investigation?

Absolutely, Janine, you hit the nail on the head. So patients who have an autoimmune disease, thyroid disease diabetes, they are all going to be pre-sensitized to having dry eye disease.

It's definitely a risk factor. You add on to that being female, being over the age of 40, and you have a hot mess expressed towards dry eyes. Unfortunately, and you know, then we're spending our day in front of our computer.

So when you look at dry eye, you can look so many things that we can change to help our environments. We can add a humidifier at our desk, we could blink more, use some artificial tears, support with some omega-3 fatty acids.

But if that is not working and if you have one of these additional risk factors, like a health problem, autoimmune disease, diabetes, thyroid disease.

those are also, even someone with allergies, taking an oral antihistamine on a regular basis will decrease your tear production very quickly. So if that is you, please see your eye care provider.

See your local eyecare provider and let them know, hey, I have these symptoms. My eyes sting and burn. They're red, they're sensitive to scents and makeups and things that are around my eyes, and I use a digital device to do my job, you know, and so that the doctor can prescribe, number one, a prescription medication.

Risk factors and when to see an eye doctor

We have immunomodulators that can help reduce the inflammation in the eyes. I find that these are very key with my autoimmune patients having a prescriptions drug on board because they have a systemic disease that needs more support.

And letting the doctors know I have an auto immune disease, I take an antihistamine on a regular basis, coffee a day, and I am dehydrated. You just have to be honest with your healthcare practitioners, right?

If you know that you're not drinking enough water, let them know. There's tons of things that we can suggest and advise, but if you don't tell us what you are really doing behind the scenes, it's harder to know." It's so true.

It so, I mean, we just have to. And yeah, that's why I'm here. I am hoping to make, you know, Madison a little more approachable when it comes to looking at what's going on with our bodies.

Now, of course you have a TEDx talk. You talk all about your personal experience and I would love for you to share a bit with folks because you mentioned about red eyes and dry red.

A lot of folks will come into my office and they see it as two separate things. And I would love for you to kind of bring that full circle for folks because unfortunately I have sometimes a hard time convincing folks that your red eyes are actually a dry eye situation.

And in many cases, I mean, sure, there's some caveats and I'm gonna let you explain since this is your specialty, not mine, but please tell us a little bit more about your journey and how you had the red eye, dry eyes, the whole thing and help us folks to really see Oh wait, maybe my red eyes are dry eyes.

Alright, so let's start with something super simple. Let's say I took my thumb right here and I smashed it with a hammer. My thumb would then be red, right?

So my thumbs would be inflamed. So redness equals inflammation. If we think about any other part of our body, if our elbow was inflame, it would red and puffy.

Right? If our cheek, we had a dental procedure and our cheeks were inflamed, it would be red and puffy. So it's the same thing with our eyes. It's just that we're thinking that the redness is something different other than inflammation because we are not correlating that quite as readily, maybe because the symptoms don't line up.

But rediness equals inflammation. We can just kind of lay that as the groundwork. So my own personal story kind of happened, happened when I was a lot younger, um, in my 20s and I, was I contact lens wearer.

Um, I wore makeup every day to work because I would be a newly minted optometrist and was in, my, first job and my I moved to New Mexico because my now husband, he wasn't my husband then, but he was my boyfriend and I followed him to new Mexico and he in the military.

So we lived a lot of places throughout the US, But our first station was in Albuquerque, New mexico, which if you have never been there, it is the high desert.

It's an elevation of about a mile high and it's very dry. So, when I moved there, it was just the perfect storm of new environment, new job, where my eyes were doing new things, spending more time on the computer, and spending time behind the microscope, which might even blink even less when we're behind a microscope than we do on a digital device.

and then the environment of all of that. So I was in my late 20s and really struggled so much to wear my contact lenses first. I wasn't able to where my contacts lenses throughout the day like I had been when I when i was a student and My eye makeup didn't wanna stay on my face because my eyes were red and watery and irritated.

I would start to cry my makeup off. So I went down the whole rabbit hole of let me try 15 different eye make-up removers and seven different mascaras and all the different eyeshadows and nothing felt better on eyes, right?

Because truly it was that my eye themselves were inflamed and dry and needed to do a whole reboot.

Personal dry-eye journey and TEDx story

It was at the beginning of my career and I just, I felt so hopeless that, you know, here I was, finally made it through all of the school and I'm really, I am a real doctor now, but I feel like I couldn't fix myself.

Luckily, research has become a long way since then. The way that we treat dry eyes is so much more thorough. We understand the causes a lot better and there's so many more things that We can do so over the past 20 years of really I've been in practice now 25 years gathering all of that information all that experience all the thousands and thousands of thousands Of patients that I have seen but the impetus was trying to help myself So that, I could see my own patients and not have tears running down my face and my vision blurring throughout the day on this.

Isn't that so common for us doctors? Like we get really interested in something because either ourselves or a loved one, it hits home for and then we end up diving deep.

100%. 100% I'm definitely here because of multiple things, you know, mom, And then, you know, now here because of my own health and the whole perimenopause thing and just, yeah, it's incredible.

You know looking, I wonder if there's something in the universe, right, where it is meant to happen because that's like what we're here for, like that.

That's our journey. Exactly. a calling and hits us first. And then we've got to figure it out and then spread the word so that everyone else can have an easier time at it.

Because dry eye, it really is happening to so many patients around us. You know, you can talk to your girlfriends or your loved ones and they will have these symptoms.

play them off and say, Oh, you know, my eyes are just bothering me today because you had that report I had to get done yesterday. I was on the computer nonstop.

It was that's why they're bothering. Not knowing that it's really this snowball of note. Your eyes didn't make enough tears yesterday there. causing inflammation on the front surface of your eye, and if we don't step in and stop that inflammatory cycle, they get more dry, then it starts happening more and more often.

So realizing, recognizing those symptoms as a problem instead of a, it's just because I did this one thing, is the

point. And what you're saying makes perfect sense because, you know, the long-term results of dry eye that's not mitigated, now I'm hearing folks getting plugs and different types of procedures done to try to counter the dry.

And so at what point do we kind of gauge between like, okay, maybe this has gone beyond what I can do for myself. And of course, in this podcast, I want everybody to try to do what you can, you know, for yourself.

But I do want to maybe put in a little bit of fear. I don't know. Like the word fear, but like little of like warning that you could do the free things.

and if the three things, You know I'm out and, or you're not doing them enough, then we end up with. Right. So one thing that I did in my TED Talk, and if anyone wants to listen to the TED talk, I fully support that.

Please, please go and listen. The test that i did during my Ted Talk is something that anyone can do at any time. And this will give you a really kind of quick and dirty, am I in trouble or not with my dry eyes.

So, Janine, why don't we walk through it? It's a quick, it's 10-second test, and so what I like people to do is just kind of get your eyes ready, kind-of blink a couple of times, then what i'm going to is count to 10 for 10 seconds, we'll count 10, you're going try not to blink.

You're gonna hold your eye open and we will see how many seconds you can get before you have to blank and then I'll tell you the grading scale, okay? So everyone's gonna blink, blink blink and then hold your eyes open.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, nine, ten. All right, what number did you make it to, Janine? I made it, I think I make to nine and a half, maybe.

Right? Did you start burning it? What number were you like stinging and burning? You know, instead of more of like a sting and burn I felt like it twitch.

I feel like my eyes wanted to twitch underneath. Gotcha. Yeah, I started feeling around six to seven seconds, mine were really stinging and burning, and by eight seconds I had to give up, so I have to blink.

Now I would say that if you made it to eight or more seconds before you were stinking and Five to eight, it's moderate and below five seconds. Really, there's something going on and you really need to make an appointment to see your eye care practitioner.

If you're not able to hold your eyes open without blinking for five second, your tear film is breaking up. It's dehydrating very quickly and it is time to step in and see a medical provider.

That's a quick and dirty kind of easy test to do. Takes only 10 seconds. It'll just give you a gauge. Fun thing would be to like do it at the beginning of the day before you've started working on the computer and do right before.

You take a lunch break and see, you know, does that four hours on. Did that significantly make a difference in. the quality of the tears on the front surface of my eyes.

So I like that. I liked the before and after check too. Now what I kind of thought of, you know, because eye twitching can be another thing that a lot of folks will sometimes attribute to dry eye, but also I've seen like I'm fatigued, my, eyes are dry because I am tired.

Dry-eye self-test and symptom severity

Kind of comments go hand in hand too, So I am super curious on the eye twitch component. Is it a deficiency of a mineral or is it more an eye strain thing?

Like what's your take on this? So an I twitch is like any other muscle twitch. And when a patient comes in and is complaining of an eye twitch and it's not related to stress or lack of sleep, that can also cause it.

But in general, the treatment that I give my patients just first off is to increase electrolytes, magnesium, potassium. I'll have them eat some bananas, drink some Gatorade, get some more electrolyte into their system.

And if that doesn't cure it, The funny thing about that blepharospasm is that it can't be related to anemia. So if it continues and it doesn't go away, seeing a doctor about looking into anenia.

And then the crazy thing is it is curable with Botox injections. If you have a spasm, and I've definitely seen it in the 25 years of practice, I had probably two patients that just constantly spasmed no matter what they did all day long, their eyes just blinking and blinking.

Those poor patients, they need some Botocs so that they can function more more regularly. I think what's more common is, though, that we get run down and we'll get a twitch just for a shorter period of time, and increasing your electrolytes is an easy way to cure that.

Sounds good. Yeah, I that's one that I, think maybe, you know, when I look at my how I was doing things, as I'm opening them really wide, was I trying to counter?

balance there by opening my eyes too wide. Can you cheat on this test? Did I try to cheat? That wasn't what was happening here. I think with you, you're realistic about, okay, are they stinging and burning when you are holding them open?

Yeah. Do we need to like hold them up and like do you read the headlights? Probably not because that's not how you look at the computer with your eyes wide open.

You're just looking. So, but noticing that stinging and burning is really better even than waiting for you not to blink. That makes sense. You know what's funny?

Now my eyes feel like they are actually stinking and you stressed them out. I'm highly suggestible, apparently. So funny, so funny. Yeah, I like feeling it now at the bottom.

I mean, maybe I tried to cheat too hard on the test. Goodness, you guys, if you cheated and you open your eyes too big, try it again. But I liked the before and after, though.

For the workday, because that seems like a real good assessment. So, okay, say you've got to be on the computer because that's your job. And you were talking about the blinking.

What's you're opinion if you get up and you, is it better to get and walk away from the computers and do some of the blinking? Is it is better, I used to always hear, trace the outline of a room.

what other suggestions do you have for folks that maybe they need to up from their desk? and do something else. So again, I'll put in a little plug. I do have a downloadable PDF that's going to walk you through how to set up your workstation.

How close should your computer monitor be from you? Should you be able to touch it? So should you'd be right up on it that where should it be placed on the desk?

What font sizes, what colors, What brightness settings should we be using? All of those things are in the download able PDF. Getting yourself set The next would be adding a humidifier.

If you guys in Wisconsin, you've probably got the heater blaring because it's freezing cold outside. It is actually 75 degrees here in Louisiana. So we don't have the heaters on.

Eye twitching, breaks, and workstation habits

Welcome to January in the South. The humidifiers, depending on your environment and depending upon the time

of year, it might be real important. And then, so if you download the handout, You can get yourself all set up.

But what do we do when we take a break from work? Well, we pull out our phones, right? We grab our phones and then we go and we sit and read our phone instead of being on our computer.

So absolutely, I would like step away. You're going to take a break from work, you're gonna just take break for your eyes. Get up from your desk, do a lap around the office, drink a whole glass of water, close your eye.

And you could even walk into the break room and warm up a microwave your closed eyes for five minutes while you're having a break. So there's a ton of things that you could do to really rest the eyes, relax them, you know, pop in your earbuds and just listen to an audio book or a meditation for a few minutes and detox from the work environment, right?

Have that calming, meditate, close your eyes. Those kinds of thing. I think there are a lot of different things you can do even when that is your job eight hours a day.

So good, so good. I was hoping you were going to say the phone thing. I was waiting for it. She's going say it, she's gonna say think out of your computer and then you go right to your phone.

Exactly. Oh my gosh. Your resource for the digital devices is a really great option for folks, especially for educating kiddos. on how far to be away from these things.

And the brightness is something that I think maybe folks might not think about. Will you give us a little bit more detail as to why the Brightness matters for the eyes?

Right. So one thing that we want to do for our eyes is create contrast. That's why we have a white piece of paper with black letters so that the contrast makes it easier for eyes to read.

But if we start turning up the brightness on that white paper, it actually decreases the contrast and then it's going to just shrink your pupil down, irritate your eyes.

That brightness coming off the screen can cause more glare from the items around you. And so you're having to negotiate what's on the scene versus what is reflected from this screen.

ferreting out the best contrast for you and the the Best lighting in the room so that your eyes feel relaxed instead of stressed awesome now, of course that being said about brightness We've talked about of coarse dry eyes.

I would love to know like what are your go-to things? Of course, we're gonna be blinking doing our blinking exercises sounds like probably some hydration with maybe electrolytes here and then what other things would you be recommending if someone wants to keep their eyes as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

So I recommend doing four simple steps throughout the day to keep your eyes healthy. And the first would be hydrating with an artificial tear. The second is something that we haven't touched on yet, a lid and lash cleanser.

us cleansers that we use for our hair, our faces, or our teeth, you should have a special cleanser for your eyelids. So for us women, once we remove our eye makeup at night, we'll remove the makeup, then we're going to follow it with a cleanse.

Eyelid and lash cleanses come in many different varieties. There's a spray that's made of hypochlorous acid, which is naturally antiseptic. It's keeping the back bacteria that live around our lids and lashes, keeping that bacteria level down.

So that's the most simple. The next would be a lid and lash wipe, just like the makeup remover wipes, there's cleansing wipes. And then the third type is a foaming cleanser, and that is similar to a hand soap, but specifically designed to keep the oils of the eyes on board, not to strip those oils, but to cleanse the lids and getting rid of dirt,

dust, debris, and pollen and not get rid off all the oil.

So really an eye-specific cleanser is my second go-to comment for keeping your eyes healthy. The third is that warm compress. So when we use a warm compressed over our eyes, it helps to melt the oils that are inside the oil glands of our lids.

And earlier when were talking about blinking, I said that when you blink a little bit of oil is expressed and it spreads across the front surface of your eye.

When we don't blink throughout the day because we're on our digital devices and our blinking rate has gone to a third of what it should be, the oils in those oil glands harden from them not being used as regularly.

So when we heat up the oil oils and those oils glands with a warm compress, it helps to melt them so that they can come out across the front surface of our eye better.

And then the fourth step is taking a nutraceutical to support your healthy tier production. And we mentioned a couple of times, omega-3 fatty acids are really great nutritional support for our eyes.

Daily eye-care routine and supplements

Another one that's newly on the market from Bausch & Lomb is called Nutritier. That support system has vitamin D, lutein and zeaxanthin as an antioxidant, and it also has curcumin as anti-inflammatory.

So that is another nutraceutical that patients could take. to help bring down the inflammation in their eyes and support healthy tear production. I've noticed just in general that when I had more eye crusties when i wake up in the morning it might be like after a night where I have had like pizza or something and so I'm questioning now like is that the more cytokines?

Is that more an inflammation response and I am seeing it in my eyes. So, I think absolutely. What's happening is that your tears are drying out and it's leaving behind the hard particulates that are in our tears.

So could it be that there's more cytokines? Perhaps. I, think there is also during allergy season when there are more inflammatory cytocines, patients will complain more about that crustiness in the corners.

It's not necessarily a sign of infection. Infection would be more sticky and you're getting kind of a mucusy residue there in the corner. But that dried up residue really is what's left over of your tears when that 80% of water dehydrates what is left there.

And inflammation is probably a big factor. don't know precisely every component of the crust, but absolutely when there's more inflammation on your eyes, you get more crusties in the morning.

Thank you for answering my very strange question. I always have to throw one or two in on folks, and that one's been one I've wondered my entire life.

I wonder if I'm getting more eye crusties because of what I ate or something. So nevertheless, Dr. Pam Theriault, I've enjoyed our conversation. I know we've had a little bit of tech difficulties here, but I think folks are going to like this one because I never talked about dry eyes before.

Give us a scoop like you. So we had to tell folks where they can find you, how they get a hold of the PDFs. I know we'll have them here in our podcast notes here at drjcrossnd.com.

And then if they want to connect with you Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, give us the scoop on how to find them. Absolutely. Well, thanks so much. My website is my name, Pam Terrio, which is spelled pamtheriot.com.

From there, you can download the two PDFs. The first one would be at pamthereiot dot com forward slash

remover. And the second one is for digital devices is pamterio.

com, forward, slash TEDx. And those are the two PDFs that we've been talking about. As far as socials, I'm on all of the social. It's either pam.terrio or pamterio on LinkedIn, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, all the places you can find me there.

I put out tips every single day. So there's always something new to talk about in iCare. it's an ever evolving field. And so I try to keep my listeners on.

on par with what's going on in the eye world. I hope to catch you all on social media. Good deal. Well, I definitely have checked you out. Definitely going to have folks make sure they follow you.

Eye health is so important. It's something that we do tend to overlook until there's a problem, until a real problem. And dry eyes is definitely something we'll get a lot of good attention for folks.

Once again, thank you so much for coming on and guys, the everything's going to be in the podcast notes at drjcrousend.com. Janine, thanks so for having me.

It was a pleasure to.

Morning crusties, closing remarks, and resources

My pleasure as well. Hey health junkies. I'm asked all the time about what brands from supplements to toothpaste to clothing that I use. 90% of the items that are sent to me to test out do not pass my standards.

You might be wondering, what are your standards? Well, I like companies that are small companies, they're still family owned or at least owned by the original owners or someone from that group to maintain the standards.

Now I also love a company with a great story of how the business came to be. I liked things that were high quality, non-toxic, as well as transparency, major big deals.

Above all, I love things at work. So made in the U. S. is definitely a major bonus. But while I have worked with a couple of different clothing companies over the years, I realized that these companies sometimes need support in other countries to get off the ground.

And it's really important about how they treat their companies, sometimes more than being 100% made the US. Nevertheless, I'm working on putting together a list of companies that I like their products and what they stand for along with discounts for you to try them out.

Full disclosure, i do make a little commission if you buy any of the items on the page and this money goes back to helping me keep producing this podcast.

If you're curious about a few of my favorite apparel companies for life's adventures, check out the website, thehealthpodcast.co-d-e-a-t-x.me. That's the health fix podcast dot co-de-adx dot me.

And if you decide to buy anything, tell them I sent you by entering the code healthfix. All together, one word. All right. Thank you so much for watching the podcast.

You have a great day, whatever you're doing.