



## Spring allergies?

Spring is in the air! With warmer spring days come pollen from the flowers blooming and pine trees. With spring snow melt, we can have windy, dusty days that are irritating to our eyes. Many of us begin to spend more time outside running or riding a bike. This can expose us to car fumes as well.

All of these can be irritants to the eye resulting in itchy, red, burning eyes. To combat the irritant, our eyes produce tears which may make it hard to focus and see. In

addition, you may become sensitive to light.

The same feeling of itchy, watery, red eyes may be caused by a virus or bacteria. It is common for a bacterial infection to also have sticky mucus in the eye. However, bacterial or viral infections may cause little or no discharge.

The treatment for these symptoms varies. If the cause is bacterial, you may be prescribed antibiotic eye drops. If they are due to allergies, you might be told to use certain eye drops to help with the itchiness.

If your symptoms are caused by a virus, they will often go away on their own within 1-2 weeks. If your symptoms are bothersome or last longer than this, you should see an ophthalmologist. He or she can make sure you don't have a more serious eye problem.



## SLT Treatment for Glaucoma

*FCEC recently invested in equipment allowing us to offer Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT). Our practice is the only group in SW Colorado to offer this procedure to glaucoma patients.*

*The procedure is performed by our fellowship-trained glaucoma specialist, Dr. Zastrocky. He is the only glaucoma specialist in the Four Corners Region. SLT can reduce the amount of medication you may need and is often recommended when you have trouble inserting eyedrops or are not using them on a regular basis. It can be used in addition to taking medications or as a first line of treatment. To learn more, speak to your physician at your next appointment.*

# Your Vision is Our FOCUS



## Are you crying over your dry eyes?

**Wait a minute. If I have dry eyes, why would they be tearing up and watery? A common misconception of dry eye disease is that if my eyes are watering, they must be well lubricated...**

Each time you blink, a film of tears spreads over the eye. This keeps the eye's surface smooth and clear. It helps maintain clear vision. Normally, our eyes constantly make tears to stay moist and create a tear film. The tear film is made up of an oily layer, a watery layer and a mucus layer.

Sometimes, when our eyes are irritated, or we cry, our eyes make lots of tears. When eyes are chronically dry they become irritated and patients can have excessive tears. Other symptoms of dry eye include stinging, burning and feeling scratchy as if something is in the eye. The eye may appear red or irritated.

There are many causes of dry eye. Some are related to systemic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid disease or lupus. Others are related to other eye conditions like when eyelids are swollen or red or when the eyelids are turned in or out. Commonly in the

Four Corners Region, just living in our dry, arid climate can lead to dry eyes.

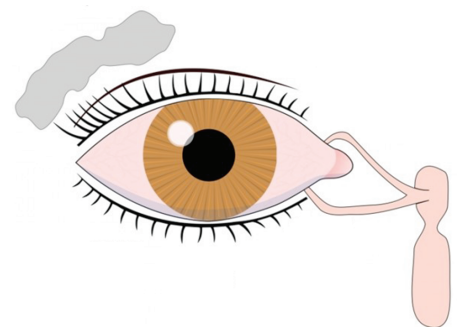
The symptoms could be caused by a change with one of the layers of the tear film, abnormalities in the structures in the eye that produce tears, and other changes to the eye.

In order to make a diagnosis, your ophthalmologist will begin with an eye exam. He or she will look at your eyelids and the surface of the eye. They will check how you blink. They may choose to make an objective measurement. One such measurement is looking at tear osmolarity. This can be followed over time to help monitor the progress of treatment in addition to how your eyes feel. Four Corners Eye Clinic is the first clinic in Durango offering tear osmolarity testing.

Treatment options vary depending on the cause and severity. They may include: lifestyle modifications, over the counter artificial tears, prescription eye drops, plugging the tear drainage ducts to decrease the amount of tears that flow out of your eye and less commonly a referral to a cornea specialist for further evaluation.

### Dry eye prevention tips:

- Try not to use a hair dryer, if possible.
- Stay away from warm rooms. In the winter, add moisture to the air with a humidifier. Or put a pan of water near your heater or radiator.
- Protect your eyes from drying wind by wearing wrap-around sunglasses.
- Talk to your ophthalmologist about adding omega-3 fatty acids to your diet for dry eye relief. They are found naturally in oily fish and flax seeds. Omega-3 fatty acids can be added as a dietary supplement.
- Do you wake up with dry and scratchy eyes? Use artificial tear ointment or thick eye drops just before you go to bed.



## Benefits of a Multi-specialty Practice

**Our vision is an amazing gift. In our day to day life we don't think about all of the things that must go right in order to see.**

The amount of information about what can be done to either preserve or restore sight grows each year.

Ophthalmologists can sub-specialize in different parts of the ocular anatomy and disease processes. Often in a group practice, each physician has a unique area of expertise and experience.

At Four Corners Eye Clinic you find several different sub specialists with many years of experience treating common eye conditions. Together the group has over 30 years of experience which includes a mix of subspecialty training and experience in cataracts, glaucoma, retina, diabetic eye care, macular degeneration, functional oculoplastics, dry eye and general eye care.

At times, patients present with multiple causes or risks of loss of vision. At other times, as life progresses new conditions arise. In either case, having multiple specialists gives you timely access to the knowledge of the entire group of physicians.

When the physician providing your primary eye care uncovers new signs or symptoms causing a change to your vision, their sub-specialist colleague is just down the hall. Our physicians work together to decide the next steps to diagnose and treat your entire eye's health. If you need to see another sub-specialist, this can be done by scheduling a follow-up appointment as you check-out without the need to transfer records or establish a relationship with a new office.

Four Corners Eye Clinic can provide the majority of medical and surgical eye care without leaving the Four Corners Region.



*From left to right,*

**Karyn Bourke, MD  
John Brach, MD  
Josh Zastrocky, MD  
Eric Meyer, MD**



## Getting to Know Dr. Bourke

*Karyn Bourke was born in Atlanta, GA. She completed her internship, residency and fellowship at the University of Utah Hospitals & Clinics, specifically at the Moran Eye Center. Her practice focuses on the medical and surgical treatment of the retina. This includes diabetic eye exams and macular degeneration. She enjoys skiing, biking, scuba diving, river rafting and exploring the outdoors with her dog, Dre and her husband, Adam.*





## Welcome to the Four Corners Eye Clinic Newsletter

### Investing in New Technology



Four Corners Eye Clinic has made several significant investments in technology over the past year. In some cases, the new equipment helps us better diagnose and develop a treatment plan. In other cases, the equipment offers access to treatment options that may not have been previously available to patients in the Four Corners Region. We share information on a new test available to help diagnosis and monitor the progression of certain dry eye disease processes. In this month's newsletter we also highlight the addition of Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty, or SLT.

*Dr. Brach using test results to discuss treatment options.*

**575 Rivergate Lane, Suite 212, Durango, CO 81301**

**(970) 259-2202 • [www.fourcornerseye.com](http://www.fourcornerseye.com) • COVERED PARKING AVAILABLE**



**575 Rivergate Lane  
Suite 212  
Durango, CO 81301**

