

## How Omega 7's can relieve dry eyes?

Omega-7 fatty acids help boost the immune system and (like omega 3) reduce inflammation. Their main benefits are their ability to reduce dryness in membranes of the body. Thus they can help reduce the likes of dry eyes and reduce vaginal dryness (a common cause of irritation during menopause). I got introduced to Omega 7 in the last year by a pharmacist colleague of mine who mentioned that many of his patients found it helped relieve dry eyes. I was a little sceptical at first; however I recommended it to a few people suffering from Sjögren's syndrome (an inflammatory condition that causes severe dry eyes) and they got a benefit of it; a significant improvement in a few cases. In Whelehans Pharmacy, we stock the Pharma Nord brand of Omega 7 capsules. While omega 7 is not as beneficial to overall health as Omega 3 and it should not be seen as an alternative to proper medical assessment, it may give some relief to those suffering from dry eyes or vaginal dryness.

Omega-7 fatty acids are derived from berries of a shrub called sea buckthorn which originates in the Himalayas. Most research into the sea buckthorn plant has been carried out by Chinese and Russian scientists; sea buckthorn is widely used for its health benefits in these countries. It has long been used as part of traditional Chinese medicine. In recent years, the benefits of the sea buckthorn are becoming more recognised in Europe and North America.

### Benefits of omega-7 fatty acids

Omega-7 fatty acids help maintain healthy mucous membranes throughout the body. They increase fluidity in the membranes and prevent oxidation. Thus they prevent dryness of the eyes and genital tract lining (particularly in menopausal women). Omega-7 fatty acids accelerate tissue regeneration and have an anti-inflammatory action in the skin and mucosa.

Clinical studies demonstrate that omega-7 fatty acids have the following benefits:

- Prevention of vaginal dryness in menopausal women
- Prevent and ease dry eyes
- Promote normal immune function reduce inflammatory disorders

### Relieving Dry Eyes

One clinical study conducted on one hundred men and women aged 20 to 75 experiencing dry eye symptoms demonstrated the benefits of omega 7. For 12 weeks, half the participants took an omega 7 supplement. The group who took the omega 7 supplement experienced less redness and burning sensations than the group who took the placebo. Other studies show that omega 7 increases the fatty acid composition of the tear film meaning that the traditional symptoms of dry eyes reduced significantly.

Omega 7 has produced positive results in studies of women with Sjögren's syndrome, an autoimmune disease (more common in women than men) that causes excessive dryness in the eyes, mouth, and vagina. In one double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 24 women aged 35 to 66 took an omega 7 supplement or a placebo for 12 weeks. The omega 7 supplement gave relief to itch, pain, dryness and burning sensations in the mucosal tissues experienced by those with Sjögren's syndrome. There are no reports of significant adverse effects with Omega-7 fatty acids. Omega 7 is a supplement, not a drug. It is not meant as a substitute for proper medical assessment with your doctor and should not replace prescription medication. However, it may compliment conventional medicines.

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