I am 51 years old. I wonder why my tears sometimes flow out from both my eyes without any particular reason and when I have not been crying.

Is it because I stare too long at my computer or television screen or is it because I am exhausted?

I am afraid that my eye muscles are weakening and my eyes may become too dry. Will I become blind?

What is the cause of this and what is the best solution?

Tears are one of the eye’s defence mechanisms. They remove debris and toxins from the surface of the eye.

There is a thin film of tears protecting the front of the eye all the time. The tears are replenished when a person blinks.

When there is irritation, such as when there is soap in the eye, or when eye lashes poke into the eye, a reflex mechanism causes the lacrimal gland to produce more tears.

When a person is watching television or using the computer, the eyes blink less frequently, leading to increased dryness of the eyes. This will trigger the reflex mechanism to produce more tears.

Patients often complain of intermittent tearing, which may worsen in windy conditions or in air-conditioned environments.

Treatment will involve tear replacement and managing the problems which affect the stability of the tear film.

In some people, tearing is caused by obstruction of the tear drainage system. In such cases, the tearing is constant and less dependent on external factors.

Patients may complain of constantly wet corners of the eye and some may even have vision disturbance if the tear film becomes thicker.

If the tear drainage system is completely blocked, mucus and debris can collect at the lacrimal sac region (this is located between the inside corner of the eye and the bridge of the nose).

This may lead to an infection (dacryocystitis) which may involve the orbit (the soft tissue surrounding the eyeball). If this is severe, it may lead to loss of vision.

The treatment for an obstructed tear drainage system is surgery.

You may want to see a doctor to find out the cause of your problem.

Your unexpected tearing may be troublesome and embarrassing, but it is unlikely to lead to blindness.

If tearing happens frequently, do not rub your eyes with excessive force when drying them as this may lead to wear and tear and bleeding of the eyelid.

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