



ALS and Eye Health with Eye Gaze

Education: When implementing an eye gaze communication device, education should be provided regarding eye health. **Every pwALS who uses an eye gaze communication device should be using eye drops to ensure hydration and eye health from the very start of eye gaze communication device use.** Many people will not report dry eyes before the challenges/irritation have started. It is better to keep the tear layer intact rather than trying to address damage after the corneal surface dries out. PwALS risk loss of tear layer and corneal damage resulting in an inability to use an eye gaze communication device.

Eye Health: Eye health and ensuring your tear layer stays moist and healthy is imperative to ensuring communication through eye gaze. ALS impacts your eye health in many ways:

1. Medications may dry eyes (saliva reducing medications, allergy medication)
2. Respiratory masks may dry eyes
3. Decreasing blink/closure of eyelids may occur due to muscle changes
4. Decreasing blink rate may occur with an eye gaze communication device with dwell

Symptoms Of Dry Eye: May include redness, stinging, light sensitivity, watery eyes, mucus near eyes, blurry vision, and **difficulty accessing eye gaze communication devices.**

****The recommended treatments below should be used as a guide to discuss appropriate treatment options with your medical team before starting.****

Eye Drop Treatment: Avoid allergy eye drops as these can often quickly cut off a pwALS' ability to use eye gaze and all eye drops should be ***Preservative Free (PF) * Avoid rubbing across the surface of the eye***

Saline 4-6 x day: Theratears PF, Refresh Classic PF

(Blink intact) Viscus drops 2 x day: **Refresh Celluvisc PF**, Theratears Liquid Gel PF, Systane Lubricating Drops PF

(Blink impaired) Lipid/Emulsion drops 2 x day: **Systane Hydration PF**, Soothe XP PF

Ointment: Systane NightTime Eye Ointment, Systane Night Gel *** These can block the use of eye gaze, should be used overnight and not during the day**

Eyelid Compress Treatment: Redness along the lash line may signal the need for treatment and attention. Oil glands are located along the lash line. The lids must contact fully to activate the oil gland. Oil is important to coat the eye and reduce tear evaporation. A compress 2 x day is recommended. ****Avoid rubbing across the surface of the eye****

- Apply warm compresses (cloth with warm water) to help warm the oil in the eyelid glands and improve flow. 4-5 min at a time
- Eyelid foam cleanser or wipes
- Cooling mask can be used to temporarily reduce redness and/or decrease inflammation