

Eye lubricant products for dry eye conditions in primary care	V2.3	Last reviewed: 05/01/22	Review date: 31/10/25
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Follow [Guidance on management of dry eyes](#) and **self care** before considering a prescription.

Self Care: If preventative measures alone for mild/moderate cases are not sufficient then patients should be advised to purchase a suitable product OTC.
Mild to moderate cases can usually be treated with lubricant eye treatments that can easily be purchased over the counter. No routine exemptions are included in the [NHSE guidance](#). Please note that an exemption from prescription charges does not exclude a patient from the NHSE guidance.

The products below are in order of viscosity from thin to thick. Selection can be started at any step depending on mild, moderate or severe symptoms. Products containing same active ingredients as the ones listed in this guidance should be available to purchase over the counter. **Stop one before starting the next (unless adding in night-time ointment).**

Drug name	Hypromellose 0.3% <i>Thin viscosity</i>	Polyvinyl alcohol 1.4% <i>Middle viscosity</i>	Carmellose 0.5% <i>Middle viscosity</i>	Carbomer 0.2% <i>Thick viscosity</i>	Carmellose 1% <i>Thick viscosity</i>	Sodium hyaluronate 0.2% <i>Thick viscosity</i>	Paraffin based eye ointment	
No known preservative allergy	Aapromel (0.69p) or Tear dew (0.99p) 1 month expiry	Sno Tears 1 month expiry £1	VIZcellose 0.5% PF 3 month expiry 10ml £2.88	Clinitas Carbomer 1 month expiry £1.49	VIZcellose PF 1% 3 month expiry 10ml £1.82	Eyeaze 0.2% PF 3 month expiry 10ml £4.15	If dry eye symptoms at night consider adding a paraffin based eye ointment preparation such as Xailin Night(£2.60) , Hylo- night (£2.75) or Hydramed Night (£2.32)	
Preservative Free (PF): SHOULD be prescribed for true preservative allergy, evidence of epithelial toxicity from preservatives, treatment > 3 months and be CONSIDERED for conditions requiring frequency > 4 times a day, and soft/hybrid contact lens wearers. Single use unit dose vials (UDV) should only be used if needed or of requested by consultant in clinic letter. Otherwise consider using PF bottle first.								
PF bottles	Evolve Hypromellose 0.3% PF - 3 month expiry £1.98	-	VIZcellose 0.5% PF 3 month expiry 10ml £2.88	Evolve Carbomer PF 3 month expiry 10g £2.80	VIZcellose PF 1% 3 month expiry 10ml £1.82	Eyeaze 0.2% PF 3 month expiry 10ml £4.15		
PF Unit Dose Vials (UDVs)	Lumecare Singles Hypromellose 0.3% £4.65 for 30	Refresh Ophthalmic 1.4% eye drops 0.4ml UD £2.25 for 30	Lumecare Singles Carmellose 0.5% eye drops 0.4ml UD £3.41 for 30	Ocu-lube carbomer eye gel 0.6ml preservative free UD £5.25 for 30	Celluvisc 1% eye drops 0.4ml UD £3.00 for 30	Blink Intensive Tears eye drops 0.4ml UD £2.97 for 20		
Non formulary choices. DO NOT PRESCRIBE	Tears natural, Tear Lac, Isopto-Plain, Artelac drops, Artelac PF, Lumecare PF drops	Liquifilm Tears Hydroxyethylcellulose or hyetellose (Minims® Artificial tears)	PF drops Carmellose 0.5% Optive eye drops Carmize Xailin fresh UDV	Viscotears UDV, Gel tears, Viscotears Liquivisc	PF drops Carmellose, 0.5% Optive eye drops, Carmize, Xailin fresh UDV	Optive fusion, Hylotear, VisuXL, Vismed, Thealoz Duo, Lubristil, Hylofresh	Simple ointment £52 per tube	

Refer to secondary care if symptoms persist, do not respond to 3 different drops for 4-6 weeks each or vision deteriorates – see [Prescribing Guidance](#) for more detail.

Consultant recommendation only	Prescribing Notes	Description of viscosity
Ilube (Acetylcysteine) drops for corneal filaments. Systane balance (Hydroxypropyl guar) for meibomian gland deficiency. Sodium hyaluronate: Clinitas Multi 0.4% 10ml (£6.99), Hylo-Forte 0.2% (£9.50), Oxyal 0.15% for punctuate keratitis.	One 10ml bottle contains approximately 200 drops. If the consultant requests a non-formulary product, please change to formulary choice product in the same drug class. As last resort, then prescribe generically or prescribe if product cost is < £6.	Thin – Almost like water. Middle – Like oil. Thick - Like thick oil but only blurs vision for a short time. Ointment - Like jelly or Vaseline – blurs vision