



# ANDORRA PEDIATRICS

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## Blocked Tear Duct

### What should I look for?

- Your baby's eye is always watery.
- Tears run down the face even without crying.
- During crying, the nostril on the blocked side remains dry.
- Symptoms begin before your baby is 1 month old.
- Your baby's eye is not red and the eyelid is not swollen.

### What is a blocked tear duct?

If the above symptoms are present, your child probably has a blocked tear duct on that side. This means the channel that normally carries tears from the eye to the nose is blocked. Although the obstruction is present at birth, the delay in onset of symptoms can be explained by the occasional delay in tear production until the age of 3 or 4 weeks.

### How common is a blocked tear duct?

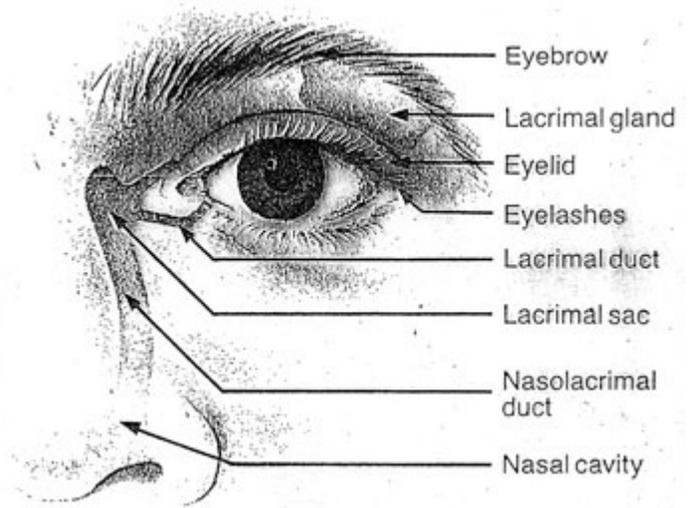
This is a common condition, affecting 6% of newborns. Of these 6%, both sides are blocked 30% of the time. Over 90% of blocked tear ducts open up spontaneously by the time a child is one year old.

### Is surgery necessary to treat a blocked tear duct?

If the blockage continues after age 1 year, an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) can open the blockage. This involves a minor surgical procedure performed in an outpatient surgical center.

### Can I treat my baby's blocked tear duct at home?

Massaging the lacrimal sac (where tears collect) 2-3 times a day may help clear out any mucus that has collected at the opening of the tear duct. Always wash your hands carefully before doing this. The lacrimal sac is in the inner, lower corner of the eye. Start at the inner corner of the eye and gently press upward, using a cotton swab. A small amount of clear fluid may be expressed from the tear duct.



**Are antibiotics necessary to treat a blocked tear duct?**

Usually antibiotics are not needed. Because of poor drainage, eyes with blocked tear ducts may become infected. The infected eye produces a yellow or green discharge. A slight discharge present only when your baby wakes from a nap can be gently wiped out.

Use a wet washcloth (not cotton balls) and gently wipe from the upper lid down to the lower lid, being careful not to scratch the eye. If the eye discharge continues, treatment with an antibiotic ointment or drop may be necessary.

This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.