



MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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BLOCKED TEAR DUCT

Diagnostic Findings

- Continuously watery eye
- Tears running down the face even without crying
- Onset at birth to a few months of age
- Eyes are not red and eyelid not swollen

Cause

If these symptoms are present, your child probably has a blocked tear duct on that side. This means that the channel that normally carries tears from the eye to the nose is blocked. Tear production is not affected. 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 in some babies. Both sides are blocked 30% of the time.

Expected Course

This is a common condition, affecting 6% of newborns. Over 90% of blocked tear ducts open up spontaneously by the time the child is 12 months of age. If the obstruction persists beyond 12 months of age, an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) can open it with a probe.

Home Care For Preventing Infection

Because of poor drainage, eyes with blocked tear ducts become easily infected. The infected eye produces a yellow discharge. To prevent an eye infection, massage the lacrimal duct (where tears collect) four times a day. Always wash your hands carefully before doing this. The lacrimal duct is located in the inner corner of the eye. Gently press up and down using your finger or a cotton swab. If the eye becomes infected, antibiotic eye drops or ointment may be necessary.

Call Our Office If:

- The eyelids are red or swollen.
- A red lump appears at the inner lower corner of the eyelid.
- The eyelids are stuck together with pus after naps.
- A lot of yellow discharge is present.
- Your child reaches 12 months of age and the eye is still watering.
- You have other concerns or questions.