

Thyroid Eye Disease

ASK YOUR OPTOMETRIST

What is thyroid eye disease?

Thyroid eye disease, also called thyroid orbi-topathy, occurs when the thyroid gland starts to overproduce hormones, which increases metabolism. It is considered an autoimmune disease, and when the immune system attacks the thyroid it also attacks the tissues around the eyes. The cause of this disease is not yet entirely clear.

How does thyroid disease affect the eyes?

Patients affected by this condition may experience dryness of the eye, swelling of the tissues around the eyes or a noticeable bulging of the eye itself. This causes some individuals to squint and/or experience double vision that can be very dangerous, particularly for driving.

Common signs of thyroid eye disease:

You may notice dryness (even when your eyes water or tear up), a bulging or staring appearance of the eye, retraction of the eyelids, double vision, irritation and/or decreased vision. In severe cases, especially in younger patients, the swelling can press on the optic nerve damaging it, resulting in fading of colours or even loss of vision.

How is thyroid orbitopathy treated?

The first priority is to treat the cause, which usually means having your Optometrist co-manage your condition with a Medical Doctor. Thyroid medications will be used to get the thyroid's hormone production controlled. Therapy for your visual symptoms may include drops for dryness, patching of the affected eye, special prisms for eyeglasses and possible surgery.



Ask your Optometrist for more information!