

Winter's many challenges to eye health

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(HealthDay)—Dry, itchy eyes are a common problem in the winter and low humidity is a major reason, one ophthalmologist says.

"On average, the humidity drops in the winter with the colder weather," said Marissa Locy, an instructor in the department of ophthalmology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"In addition, most people turn on the heat in their homes or offices to combat the cold. So, what you end up having is lower humidity outside, and even lower [humidity](#) inside, making for warm, [dry conditions](#) where moisture can evaporate from the eye faster than normal," she explained in a university news release.

If you spend time in heated locations, use a humidifier to add some moisture back into the air. Drink lots of fluids. Keeping your body hydrated will help maintain moisture in your eyes.

Don't blow heat directly onto your face, because this can dry up [moisture](#) in your eyes. In your car, direct heat vents towards your lower body.

When outdoors, wear eye protection or a hat with a visor to keep particles and wind from getting into your eyes.

If you wear [contact lenses](#), be sure to keep them clean. In [cold weather](#), your eyes could dry even more with contacts. Always wearing clean contacts reduces the risk of infection and itching, Locy said.

And talk to your doctor. Occasional bouts of dry eyes can eventually progress into dry eye disease.

More information: The U.S. National Eye Institute has more on [dry eye](#).

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