

## What are Punctal Plugs?

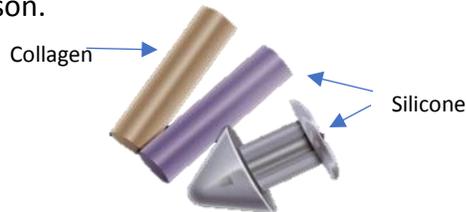
Punctal Plugs are little plugs made of either a dissolvable material, for temporary relief, or silicone for a long-term solution to dry eye problems. The plugs are 1mm or smaller and block the flow of draining tears to help relieve some of the symptoms of dry eyes.



At Nova Eye Care, we offer two types of Punctal Plugs:

### Collagen

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body, making up 25-35% of the body's protein content. These plugs can last for several months, but will eventually dissolve, making these a great way to determine if Punctal Plugs are the right path for your dry eye treatment or to get you through the dry season.



### Silicone

Our silicone plugs are considered "semi-permanent". They won't dissolve, but can be easily removed by our doctors, should you experience any discomfort or no longer feel like this treatment option is right for you.



## PUNCTAL PLUGS



## Patient Information

PUNCTAL PLUGS are tiny plugs that block the tear ducts to prevent an excess of drainage from the eyes. It helps maintain surface moisture and increases the tear film to relieve dry eyes.

### Nova Eye Care

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For more about Punctal Plugs see  
[www.alaskadryeyecenter.com](http://www.alaskadryeyecenter.com)

## How are Punctal Plugs Inserted?

Our eye doctors will do a close-up lighted exam of your eyes and eyelids to determine the correct size of Punctal Plug. We may use a special instrument to measure the openings of your tear ducts to determine the size of plug required for your treatment.

Each eye has two tear duct openings, one in the top lid and one in the bottom. Punctal plugs can be used in any of the openings, but they are most commonly placed in the bottom lids.



*Forcep-Style Insertion*

*Syringe-Style Insertion*

Inserters are used to place the Punctal Plugs. Inserter can be forcep-style, which are like long tweezers, or syringe-style, where the plugs are pushed into place. Additional help from forceps may be required.

In majority of cases, no anesthetic is required. Other than slight initial discomfort, you shouldn't be able to feel the plug once inserted. You should be able to drive home and resume normal activities immediately after the procedure.

## Punctal Plug Shapes

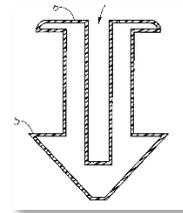
**Umbrella.** These types do not "disappear" into the tear duct, making them easy to spot and remove if necessary.



**Tapered.** This design exerts extra force horizontally to help keep the Punctal Plug in its proper place.



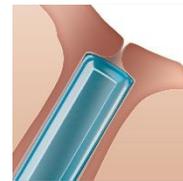
**Hollow.** A hollowed interior can help the Punctal Plug adhere to the shape of the eye's tear duct.



**Reservoir.** This style captures and holds tears, which helps reduce foreign body sensation and increase comfort.



**Slanted or low-profile cap.** This design can help maintain comfort, while providing extra stability.



Some Punctal Plugs will have **Traction Ribs**, designed to provide flexibility and fixation.



## Side Effects

Punctal Plug insertion is typically uneventful and rarely involves serious side effects.

When the Punctal Plugs work too well, excessive tearing and watery eyes can occur. If this happens, we can remove or replace the plug with a different type to allow for better control of tear flow.

Punctal Plugs can be displaced or lost for a variety of reasons. Hard types of plugs are more likely to become dislodged, and things like rubbing your eyes too much can cause them to fall out. You will need to visit our doctors to have it replaced.

Rarely, eye infections can occur. Treatment with a topical antibiotic may be needed in these cases.

## Punctal Plug Removal

Collagen Punctal Plugs are rarely removed, as they are absorbed by the body. Silicone, the "semi-permanent" plug, can last indefinitely, but are easily removed if you experience discomfort or other complications.

If removal is considered necessary by our doctors, we can remove the plugs in two ways:

1. Flush the tear ducts with saline solution. This forces the plugs to drain in the nose and throat with the other tears.
2. Using forceps to grasp and extract the plugs.

*Please feel free to ask our staff or doctors if you have any questions regarding Punctal Plugs!*