

## Patient information

# Treatment of mild thyroid eye disease

### What is thyroid eye disease?

Thyroid eye disease is a condition in which the eye muscles and soft tissues behind the eye become inflamed. It is an auto-immune disease but it is not known exactly what causes it. Thyroid eye disease is mainly associated with an over-active thyroid due to Graves' disease, although it does sometimes occur in people with an under-active or normally functioning thyroid.

### What treatment is available for mild thyroid eye disease?

In most people, thyroid eye disease remains mild and does not threaten sight. Topical lubricant eye drops (artificial tears) may be helpful in reducing symptoms of watering, grittiness and soreness. You may also find it helpful to wear sunglasses in bright light. Sleeping with the head of the bed raised on blocks can help reduce puffiness and congestion around your eyes in the morning.

### What can I do to prevent my eye disease from getting worse?

- Avoid fluctuations in your thyroid levels - particularly hypothyroidism. Make sure that you have thyroid blood tests regularly, and follow your doctor's

advice about when and how to take your medication. This will make sure that your thyroid levels remain normal and stable, which will give your eyes the best chance of improving.

- If you are a smoker, it is important to stop smoking - ask your doctor for advice on how to stop, or enroll on a smoking cessation programme. Smoking increases your chance of developing thyroid eye disease. Patients with thyroid eye disease who continue to smoke often have worse disease and respond less well to treatment. However, this effect seems to improve soon after giving up smoking.
- There is evidence that oral selenium supplements are beneficial in mild forms of thyroid eye disease. Selenium is a trace element present in some foods but many people have a mild deficiency. A randomised controlled trial has shown that 200 microgrammes (mcg) of selenium taken once daily for six months during the active inflammation phase may reduce the severity of eye disease.

The **Thyroid Eye Disease Charitable Trust (TEDct)** can provide information, care and support to those affected by thyroid eye disease.

### **Thyroid Eye Disease Charitable Trust**

PO Box 1928, Bristol, BS37 0AX

Tel: 0844 800 8113

Email: [ted@tedct.co.uk](mailto:ted@tedct.co.uk)

[www.tedct.co.uk](http://www.tedct.co.uk)

## **If you wish to contact the Eye Department**

Telephone 01284 713815 / 01284 712636

Monday – Thursday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

### **At the weekend and out of hours**

Telephone 01284 713000 and ask to speak to the “on call” ophthalmic doctor.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>*



© West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust