

Why your eye waters

Tears drain through a tiny opening called the punctum at the inner corner of each eyelid. If it narrows, tears overflow onto the cheek. But watering can also be caused by dry eye and surface irritation, by eyelid position, by poor blinking, or by blockage further down the drainage system.

The decision that matters most

The question is not whether the punctum looks small, but whether narrowing at that point is genuinely responsible for your symptoms. Opening the punctum will not cure watering coming from somewhere else. If the main cause is dry eye, eyelid position or blockage further down, we will say so rather than performing an operation that will not solve your problem.

Do you need treatment?

Treatment is considered when watering is persistent and troublesome, examination confirms significant narrowing, the eyelid position is suitable, and your consultant believes punctal stenosis is an important contributor. If symptoms are mild, observation is entirely reasonable.

Your alternatives

Treating dry eye, blepharitis or eyelid inflammation can reduce reflex tearing and sometimes resolves the problem entirely. Where obstruction lies beyond the punctum, a different and larger tear drainage operation is required, which punctoplasty will not address.

What the operation does

The punctum is gently dilated and three small cuts enlarge the narrowed opening, while preserving the deeper drainage pathway. There is normally no skin incision and no visible external scar. It improves access of tears into the existing drainage system; it does not create a new route.

On the day

- Performed under local anaesthetic as a short outpatient procedure.
- The eyelid is numbed and the punctum dilated.
- Three small snips enlarge the opening, which is then checked.
- You go home the same day. Arrange your journey home.

Recovery

Mild irritation, watering, redness and a little blood-stained tearing can occur initially, and recovery is generally quick. Watering can be temporarily worse in the first days because of swelling, so judge the benefit after several weeks rather than in the first week.

Will it stop the watering?

It can substantially improve watering where punctal stenosis is genuinely responsible. It cannot guarantee a completely dry eye, because overflow often has more than one cause. A technically open punctum proves the entrance is open; it does not prove the rest of the system works.

Main risks

Bleeding, discomfort and inflammation are usually brief. Other risks include infection, scarring and re-narrowing of the punctum over time, which is the most common reason benefit fades, an opening larger than intended, persistent watering and the need for further treatment.

If watering continues

That is information rather than failure. Your consultant reassesses whether the punctum has stayed open, whether the system beyond it is patent, and whether dry eye, eyelid position or blink quality are contributing. Having a punctoplasty does not prevent any further option.

Warning signs

Contact Blue Fin Vision® promptly for severe or increasing pain, rapidly worsening swelling or redness at the inner corner,

discharge or persistent bleeding, or a significant deterioration in vision. Swelling spreading towards the nose or cheek should be assessed the same day.

Costs

Consultation and diagnostic assessment: £325. Current pricing is published in [our published price list](#) and may change. Where treatment is medically indicated, private medical insurance commonly provides cover subject to your policy and authorisation. Your quotation confirms whether one or both eyes are included.

This page is a summary, not a consent document

It does not replace the full Three-Snip Punctoplasty patient information booklet, which contains the complete information on the causes of watering, alternatives, the procedure, recovery and risks, and which forms part of your informed consent alongside your discussion with your surgeon and your consent form. Please read the full booklet before your appointment. In full: [The Blue Fin Vision® Advantage](#)

Blue Fin Vision® | Harley Street, Weymouth Street, London Eye Diagnostic Centre, Chase Lodge, Chelmsford, Hatfield, Abbey Wood | 07704 225640