

Tear Duct Obstruction

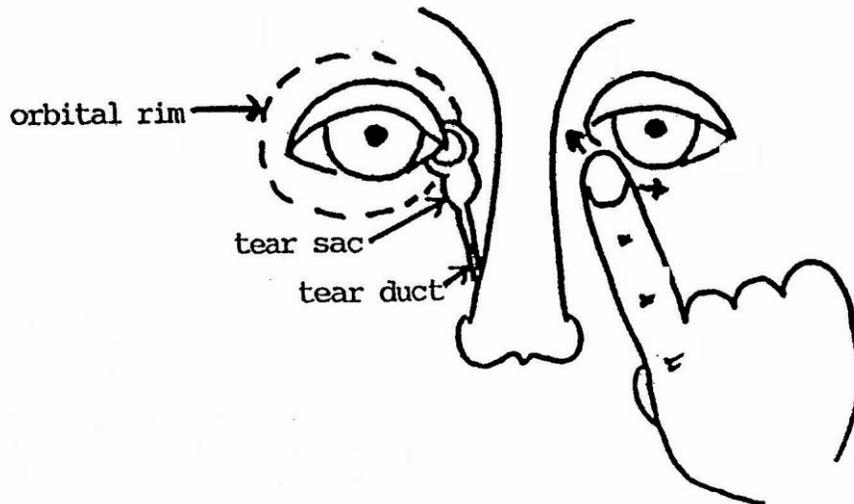
Many babies are born with blockage of the tear duct. The tear duct normally carries tears away from the eye and drains into the nose. When this duct is blocked, tears build up and spill onto the cheek. Infection can occur and there can be a lot of crusting and matting.

Fortunately, most babies will outgrow this condition (90%). Tear duct massage will frequently help speed the opening of the duct. To perform tear duct massage, place your finger at the inner corner of the lower eyelid. You should be able to feel a firm boney structure, the orbital rim. Gently allow your finger to slide over the edge of the orbital rim and apply gentle pressure in a back and forth motion. You may get a backflow of tears or mucous when this is performed. This means you are exerting pressure on the appropriate spot. Do not run your finger down along the side of the nose, but keep pressure on the inner corner of the lower eyelid. After 5-10 seconds the tear sac will be empty and the massage is complete.

The massage should be repeated 3-4 times a day. Many families find that performing massage during feeding works very well. You may also be instructed to use eye drops 3-4 times a day if there is an infection. Drops should be instilled after the massage is performed.

If the tear duct obstruction does not clear by about 6-12 months of age, additional treatment may be required. A tear duct probing can usually be performed and will open in the tear duct in about 90% of cases.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.



Please call with any questions or concerns
Brighton Hill Pediatrics
151 Intrepid Lane
Syracuse, NY 13205
Phone: (315) 469-8191
Fax: (315) 410-2029
www.bhpeds.com