

## Nasolacrimal duct massage for blocked tear duct

Tears normally drain through small openings in the corners of the upper and lower eyelids, called puncta, and enter the nose through the nasolacrimal duct. Tear duct obstruction prevents tears from draining through this system causing backflow of tears and discharge from the eye.

About one in five newborn babies will have a tear duct that is not quite fully developed. It can affect one or both eyes. The most common cause is the failure of a membrane at the end of the tear duct (valve of Hasner) to open normally at or near the time of birth. Fortunately the majority of cases will resolve spontaneously in the first year of life (approximately 90%).

When obstruction is persistent, one or more of the following treatments may be recommended:

- Tear duct massage,
- Topical antibiotic eye drops,
- Tear duct probing,
- Balloon tear duct dilation, and/or
- Tear duct intubation.



Tear duct massage is something you can do at home. To do this, apply gentle pressure with your finger or a cotton tip on the outside of your baby's nose (the area between the inner eye and the nose) and then stroke downwards towards the corner of the nose. This should be repeated 6 times a day. This can help to clear pooled tears in the blocked duct. It may also help the tear duct to develop.

