

7. Eye Care

Ocular features in Progeria Risks and recommendations



Ocular features in Progeria

Most children with Progeria have tight skin and lack subcutaneous fat. These elements likely play a role in the following:

- Eyes slightly open when sleeping, likely due to tight skin and a lack of subcutaneous fat
- Eyes tear frequently; this is probably a reaction to the “dry eye” that is caused by tightened skin and a scant fat pad for the eyeball to sit in
- No eyebrows and scant eyelashes can decrease protection from dust and other irritants
- Photophobia, which is excessive sensitivity to light and the aversion to sunlight or well-lit places

Sleeping with eyes slightly open can cause “dry eye”.

Keeping eyes moist

decreases the chances of exposure keratitis.

Risks and recommendations

There may be an increased risk of needing eyeglasses, as many (but not all) of the children are wearing glasses for farsightedness at a young age. It is unknown why this occurs.

Dry eye increases the risk of exposure keratitis. This is seen as a clouding of the eye and starts very small but can grow with time and block sight. This is a serious event and needs immediate attention by an ophthalmologist. To decrease the risk of keratitis, keep the eye moist.

Here are some strategies that the ophthalmologist may recommend:

- Administer artificial tears as many times per day as possible; this is available as over the counter drops in any drug store
- At night, lubricating ointment can be placed into the eye to moisten and protect the opening
- Skin tape can be used to close the eyelids gently at night

> Photophobia

Most children with Progeria do not need special treatment for their mild photophobia. However, if needed, sunglasses, dark clips for prescription glasses, or lenses that darken in bright light can all assist with sensitivity to bright light.

It is important to incorporate annual eye examinations by a qualified ophthalmologist into the health regimen of children with Progeria, and to see an ophthalmologist if any questions about eye health arise.