



LipiFlow® Thermal Pulsation Therapy for Dry Eye

What is LipiFlow and what is it used for?

LipiFlow is an in-office medical device used to treat evaporative dry eye associated with meibomian gland disease. It is one of the most effective methods currently available for clearing blocked glands.

How does LipiFlow work?

LipiFlow uses a combination of heat and gentle, regulated pressure to liquify the oils (meibum) contained in the meibomian glands and express them from the gland orifices. Along with other measures and over time, this helps clear obstructed glands and restores them towards more normal function.

Who is suitable for LipiFlow and when should it be used?

LipiFlow is an advanced treatment option for patients suffering from meibomian gland dysfunction and consequent evaporative dry eye who have not obtained satisfactory relief from basic remedies. Patients who are asymptomatic but who show signs of meibomian gland atrophy should also consider LipiFlow as part of preserving the proper structure and function of these glands.

A key test for deciding whether LipiFlow is appropriate for you is to assess the function of your meibomian glands, for example by using a customised Meibomian Gland Expressor (MGE). The MGE is used to gently press against your meibomian glands, allowing the optometrist to assess how many of these glands are functioning properly and secreting the oils that are essential for proper tear function.

Are there any reasons for not using LipiFlow and are there any alternatives?

LipiFlow is generally not used as a first-line treatment for dry eye. It is preferable to employ basic remedies for dry eye before using LipiFlow, not least because this is likely to improve the effectiveness of LipiFlow treatment. There are no other significant contraindications or risks of LipiFlow treatment.

How much does LipiFlow cost?

The fee for a single LipiFlow treatment is \$1,055. This includes two new single-use applicators.

When should I start to feel the effect of LipiFlow and how long does it last for?

LipiFlow is not a silver bullet for dry eye and you should not expect your dry eye disease to be instantly “cured” by the first LipiFlow treatment. Typically it may take two to three months, along with follow-up treatment at home, before you will start to notice significant improvement in your symptoms.

Unlike LLLT and/or OPE IPL, where a course of multiple (2 to 4) treatments is required over a few months, LipiFlow is generally a “one off” treatment and its effect usually lasts up to 12 months. Generally it is recommended that LipiFlow treatment be repeated every 12 months, depending on the severity of meibomian gland disease.

What do I need to do before and after LipiFlow?

As noted above, it is important that before being treated by LipiFlow you undertake basic remedies to improve the health and function of your meibomian glands. These may include some or all of attention to lid hygiene, taking omega-3 supplements such as fish oil, lid warming, the use of lubricants and/or Manuka honey drops, and exercises to improve your blinking.

LipiFlow treatment is an important step in un-blocking congested meibomian glands and allowing their oils to flow freely. But it is only a start and must be followed up by continued attention to the other measures above.

How effective is LipiFlow?

A number of peer-reviewed scientific studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of treatment with LipiFlow. These studies have demonstrated statistically significant decreases in patient symptoms as well as improvements in meibomian gland secretions and tear quality and function. These studies also show LipiFlow’s superior results to other treatments for meibomian gland disease and the advantages of performing LipiFlow at an earlier stage.

Where can I find out more about LipiFlow?

Considerable detailed information about LipiFlow is available on the TearScience website at <https://tearscience.com/lipiflow/>. This website also lists the peer-reviewed studies referred to above.