

NATURAL EYECARE:

A NEW CATEGORY IN PATIENT CARE

12 DOCTORS DESCRIBE THEIR RESULTS WITH BOTH
TREATMENT AND PRACTICE OUTCOMES



Natural 
OPHTHALMICS **RX**
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Helping You Become the Doctor Your Patients Want & Expect

By Brian Banks, President, Natural Ophthalmics

Go to any store, whether a supermarket or drug store, and labels touting “all natural,” or “organic,” are hard to miss. It’s no wonder.



Natural products—those free of chemical additives and artificial processing—is a \$359 billion industry. And it’s not just for food products that consumers are craving a natural option. A new report from Grand View Research, Inc., projects that the complementary and alternative medicine market will be worth \$196.87 billion by 2025.

When you diagnose your patient with dry eyes, ocular allergies, or even cataracts, you show that you understand, not just their needs, but their wants, when you can give them the option of natural eyecare products.

“A majority of Americans say that when they make decisions about treatment



reports. “Some of those who report doing their own research say they are aiming simply to learn more about the provider’s recommendations, while other people say they do so to check for other treatment options or to learn about potential side effects of the recommended treatment.”

The doctors we work with find that having a natural option for treatment, either as the sole treatment, or as a complement to other treatments, opens a new dialogue with patients.

It is for all these reasons that our company exists. For the last two decades, we have built a business to make natural eyecare a standard treatment option for doctors to deliver to their patients. Our mission: To combine the best of the natural healing techniques into one comprehensive turn-key system

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As you read the stories of the practices profiled in this booklet, take a minute to envision how our products can transform your services to patients, too. As we have worked with so many doctors, we are eager to partner with you to take your practice to the next level—a place where natural treatments are a standard of care—a place where many of your patients want to be. We

can make it possible for you to be the kind of doctor that modern patients expect and demand.

How Do Natural- and Chemical-Based Medications Differ?

Conventional medications are often created with chemicals that control and suppress the body’s natural systems, which can cause a rebound effect that makes the problem even worse. By contrast, natural products support and trigger the body’s immune and self-regulating mechanisms to heal.”

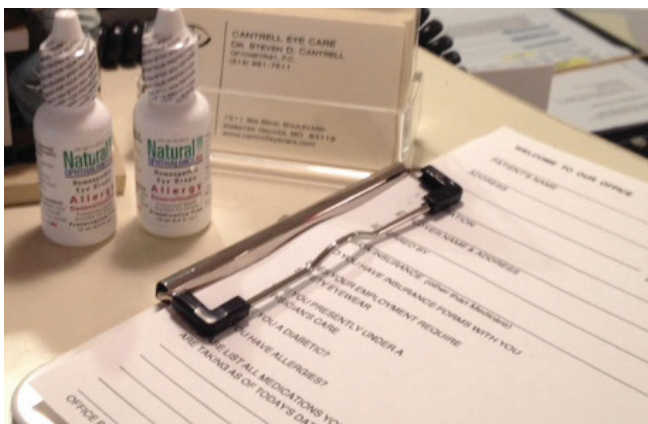
Manage Eye Conditions & Create Satisfied Patients with Natural Eye Drops

By Steven Cantrell, OD



Natural therapies can be part of your treatment plan for a variety of ocular conditions, and they can add a major revenue stream to a practice.

There are many conditions that I prescribe hydrating eye drops for, but it's important to me that I only prescribe natural drops. For those afflicted with dryness due to ocular allergies, chronic dry eye, contact lenses, glaucoma ophthalmic-induced corneal irritation, early cataracts and macular degeneration, I often recommend drops from Natural Ophthalmics. A key benefit is patients can use these drops with their contact lenses inserted, creating convenience and ease-of-use.



I have prescribed Natural Ophthalmics for about 70 percent of my patients. As usage grows, we expect to reach \$20,000 in gross profits per year from

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Natural Ophthalmics options provide many choices to customize each patient with tools for success. When seasonal hydration, care and cleaning are needed, we have light-to-aggressive solutions.”

sales of these products by the middle of fall 2016.

We are currently budgeting \$6,000 in annual inventory of Natural Ophthalmics products. We inventory three dozen assorted products, as patients wish to purchase more than one item. Our greatest supplies of inventory are in our most commonly prescribed: Ortho-K Thick and Thin, Women's Tear Stimulation, Tear Stimulation Forte and Cataract Drops and Pellets. Repeat use drives additional traffic because these products are only available in doctors' offices, like ours.

Early cataract patients are excited to hear that Natural Ophthalmics Cataract Drops and Pellets may slow or stall progression. Our Cataract Drop and Pellet sales dramatically increased in 2016.

Dr. Cantrell keeps Natural Ophthalmics products, such as these bottles to ease dry eye from allergies, chair-side in the exam room. He says it encourages patients to give the products a try when they are easily on hand.

Look for Drops with No Preservatives

Preserved over-the-counter drops often lose effectiveness within a few weeks and leave the cornea in distress. Patients are unhappy and not sure why their contact lenses are not comfortable.

Natural Ophthalmics products are prescription quality while being curative and palliative. They are designed to correct and encourage tear production to manage chronic symptoms with no preservatives.

Choose a Product Usable with Contacts Inserted

Natural Ophthalmics drops encourage tear production, restore natural function, balance tear chemistry and maintain healthy tissue. Natural Ophthalmics products are preservative free, facilitate increased reserve and will not lose effectiveness over time while wearing contact lenses.

There is no way for a patient to “overdose” their eyes with these drops. I encourage patients to place two drops of Ortho-K Thin into their contact lens bowl prior to insertion. Doing so flushes debris to increase initial comfort. This also reduces unnecessary doctor chair time.

Prescribe Drops to Aid Specialty CL Patients

Non-disposable medically necessary contact lenses require major long-term corneal support. Natural Ophthalmics options provide many choices to customize each patient with tools for success. When seasonal hydration, care and cleaning are needed, we have light-to-aggressive solutions. Chronically ill patients must wear their lenses many hours per day. Natural Ophthalmics products offer a myriad of successful options, and our patients enjoy worry-free contact lens wear.

Give Ortho-K Patients Greater Comfort

Ortho-K lenses can be a nightmare for both doctor and patient in managing discomfort due to dry eye. Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K Thin and Ortho-K Thick drops maintain healthy corneal tissue while fully hydrating the lens. Optical stability and patient comfort dramatically improve leading to long-term success.

Our most effective demonstration for the parents of patients is by having them use the same products we are prescribing for their child, and then to experience the benefits. These drops market themselves with the immediate greater comfort patients feel after trying it out.

Display Prominently

Natural Ophthalmics products are kept in three locations: next to and behind the checkout counter and chair-side in the exam room to facilitate doctor recommendation.

Market Availability of Natural Eye Drops

Word-of-mouth advertising of our Natural Ophthalmics products has been our most effective form of marketing. Our area is surrounded by many rivers and agriculture which increases pollen and mold, and, therefore, eye discomfort and dryness. Patients notice an immediate improvement after trying the products, and tell their family and friends. In addition, the Natural Ophthalmics brochure reinforces the doctor’s recommendation with take-home information to review later. Patients recognize there is not an equivalent OTC product, and our staff reinforces the dangers and unreliability of OTC products.

Advertising online, on a practice web site, or on social media, can also plant a seed in patients’ minds that these products are available in your office, and may help them.

Steven Cantrell, OD, is the owner of Cantrell Eye Care in Webster Groves, Mo. To contact: scantrellod@gmail.com



Natural Treatments Complement OD's Approach to Patient Care

By Jo Ann Jeffers, OD



Natural products can enhance a patient's overall treatment plan, and give them another, important option for care

Jo Ann Jeffers, OD, is turning her career toward a different approach to care, one that

still includes traditional optometry but goes beyond it, as well.

She continues to practice at Cherry Grove Eye Care in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. But she's reduced her time there—she sees patients part-time these days—and is devoting more hours to working with caregivers in other fields, such as anti-aging medicine and chiropractic care.

She also has a fellowship with the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, and in those studies she learned about the variety of holistic care treatments. "I've been passionate about natural health for a long time," she says. "As I got into anti-aging medicine, I started finding new products and lifestyle changes to offer to patients."

In her optometry practice, she started introducing patients to homeopathic products to treat eye conditions such as dry eye, vitreous floaters and glaucoma. And as part of her broader holistic approach, she combines those homeopathic products with changes in nutrition and the use of high-quality vitamins.

"I introduce to patients that they can go with over-the-counter treatments or homeopathic

products. I explain to them that homeopathy is not about just masking the symptoms. Homeopathy stimulates the body's immune system, so you get to the root of the cause, and they like that."

Her preferred supplier is Natural Ophthalmics. She likes the range of products covering everything from dry eye to macular degeneration.

“**Natural products allow your body to heal itself. It's something that really works.**”

There are Tear Stimulation Dry Eye Drops for Women who encounter dry eyes due to hormonal imbalance. And there are Tear Stimulation Forte Drops that address inflammation, MGD and general dryness. She asks patients to try the products and come back in a month. "They are almost always doing better," she says. Homeopathic products "allow your body to heal itself. It's something that really works."

Some patients are more willing than others to test a homeopathic approach. "It depends on the depth the patients want to go to," she says. With macular degeneration, for example, she says the progression can be slowed "by using good-quality ocular vitamins and homeopathics," she says. "I also have protocols for ocular allergies, for vitreous floaters and even for glaucoma."

The quality of vitamins and nutrients and how they're made "are a big deal," she says. Many over-the-counter products use substances that Dr. Jeffers says make them less effective. "My job is to look for companies that make products with natural



ingredients and don't have any fillers or additives," she says. "Natural ingredients will be absorbed much better." She has great confidence in the Natural Ophthalmics line of homeopathic and nutraceutical products, which she sells.

Dr. Jeffers' work beyond optometry is a new effort called Inner Vision Healing Arts. Under that name, she has been working at the Labod Chiropractic Center in Little River, South Carolina. "We are just helping people in a more natural setting," she says.

Besides nutritional eye care and anti-aging counseling, she also offers clinical hypnotherapy to deal with issues such as depression, weight loss and smoking cessation. She provides craniosacral therapy, which involves a "soft touch" technique in hour-long sessions designed to improve patients' general wellness.

She offers patients help with nutritional eye care, with an emphasis on dietary changes and using high-quality vitamin supplements when needed. She also helps patients develop an anti-aging regimen of dietary changes and nutraceutical products.

Dr. Jeffers has a seven-acre farm near North Myrtle Beach, where she grows vegetables and keeps chickens. She has a couple of bee hives, along with a mule and a rescued pony.

As she makes this career turn toward a holistic approach to health care, she's finding a willing market of patients. She says, "If you believe in it, which I do, people listen."



■ OVERVIEW:

Finally - Two unique eye drops which stimulate the production of all three tear film layers while supporting the health of the cornea, conjunctiva and eyelid. Both formulas share five powerful broad spectrum ingredients which relieve symptoms caused from inflammation due to aqueous deficiency, including severe dryness such as with Sjogren's Syndrome. Additionally, women experience more dry eye symptoms due to hormonal fluctuations so we added the two most commonly prescribed ingredients for these symptoms.

■ TREATMENT STRATEGY:

Dry eye is a chronic condition expressed as the body's inability to produce any of the components of the three film layers or to maintain cell health on the corneal surface. Our strategy is to stimulate and support the body's tissues, organs and functions which produce a healthy tear film and maintain corneal health. This should be the primary treatment strategy, and results should be analyzed before considering punctal plugs, artificial tears or chemical anti-inflammatories. The patient should also take adequate amounts of Omega 3, 6 & 9 essential fatty acids, drink plenty of water and take good quality nutraceuticals.

■ DIRECTIONS:

• Use every 3 - 4 hours for the first 2 days (front loading) • Then back off to comfort level • Increase frequency as needed • With extreme dry eye symptoms use hourly if needed. • Reapply at the first sign of returning symptoms

■ **INDICATIONS:** Dry Eye.

■ **DRUG INTERACTIONS:** None known.

■ **CONTRAINDICATIONS:** None known.

■ **SIZE:** 15 ml

Why start patients with medications when a natural approach could work wonders?

By Pauline K. Buck OD, FAAO, FCOVD



Natural products are a better way to start treatment than products with artificial additives.

One of the main reasons Natural Ophthalmics products are part of her practice is because she knows firsthand how they can help, says

Pauline K. Buck OD, FAAO, FCOVD.

At a 2012 College of Optometrists in Vision Development annual meeting in Texas, Dr. Buck was just getting over a bout of viral conjunctivitis.

She ran into Natural Ophthalmics president Brian Banks there, and he suggested Ortho-K Thin Eye Drops in place of steroids. The drops are free of preservatives and can be used as often as needed to alleviate dry, red, itchy and irritated eyes. “I did so, and the inflammation went down,” she says. “It was great.”

She began to look for ways to bring the products into her vision therapy practice in Miami, Florida. Today, Natural Ophthalmics products “are in the exam room. If I have an orthokeratology patient, the Ortho-K Drops are part of what I provide in the starter pack,” she says. “Then they can get refills from me. I keep the price competitive because I want patients to use it.” When ortho-k patients can wear and remove their contact lenses with more comfort, they’re more likely to adhere to the schedule and will gain the most from the therapy, she says.

She also turns to Natural Ophthalmics products for her dry eye patients. Dr. Buck says the products are more effective and actually cost less than artificial tears or lubricants available in stores. “The

lubricants in drug stores are pricey, and they contain a preservative,” she says. The goal in treating dry eye is to find the underlying inflammatory cause, she says. That means assessing the whole person and looking for possible causes of the condition while offering a range of possible solutions. Some of the underlying issues that contribute to dry eye symptoms could be helped by acupuncture or practicing yoga, for example. Or there might be a hormone imbalance to be dealt with. “But to make them comfortable immediately, either the Ortho-K or the Women’s Tear Stimulation Dry Eye Drops can help.”

“**If more treatment is needed, I can write a prescription. But I start with as natural a treatment as possible.**”

For some patients, allergies can be a contributing factor to discomfort or red eyes. Allergies can interfere with a great contact lens-wearing experience for many patients, and she has seen many children who are exposed to mold or other allergens. “I have no hesitation about using these products with kids. Parents appreciate having a product that isn’t another medication. If a patient has an allergy,



I start with the Allergy Desensitization Eye Drops. If more treatment is needed, I can write a prescription. But I start with as natural a treatment as possible.”

Natural treatments are becoming more widely used, Dr. Buck says, and she encourages that trend. “Anywhere I go, I talk about it,” she says.

Help Ortho-K Patients Succeed with Natural Eye Drops

By Richard Zhang, MD, OD, PhD, FIAO

A natural eye drop created especially for Ortho-K patients makes the process of reshaping the cornea more comfortable and safe for patients, enabling more patients to stick with the regimen, and stay in your practice.



Orthokeratology, or Ortho-K, represents a great opportunity for patients, and a practice builder for your practice. But only if you are able to keep your patients satisfied during the process, and able to easily stick to the regimen. My practice increases the likelihood of Ortho-K success by prescribing and selling Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K eye drops.

Ortho-K is an important part of my practice, as 30 percent of my patients are Ortho-K patients. Altogether I have 1,000 Ortho-K patients. My solo, one-location practice devotes one whole working day per week to exclusively seeing Ortho-K patients for consultation and training.

Prescribe Ortho-K Targeted Drops

Ortho-K patients need to use eye drops to insert the lens into their eyes, and the doctor has the option of just telling patients to go to the drug store and buy whatever eye drops they happen to find. However, I now prefer to direct these patients to the only eye drop on the market designed especially for the Ortho-K experience, Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K.



Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K drops contain powerful ingredients to stimulate tear film production, counteract irritation, halt allergies and reduce foreign body sensation. Homeopathic Calendula, the key natural ingredient in the drops, is known to support corneal health and is indicated for corneal abrasions and erosions. The drops come in two formulations: Thick and Thin. The Thick formula reduces mechanical irritation. The clarifying Thin formula Drop is preservative-free, and used as often as needed to alleviate dry, red, itchy, irritated eyes, and is also OK with soft contacts. The drops

are so gentle, they are safe for children, the most common Ortho-K patients, and can even be used by nursing and pregnant women.

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The natural formulation from Natural Ophthalmics assures me that there is little-to-no chance the patient will experience an allergic reaction, or eye irritation, from the drops.”

In the past, I would direct patients to simply buy eye drops, without specifying which type. Then, I found that many patients were buying whatever was on sale—often a low-quality, generic brand—rather than an optimal eye drop. The natural formulation from Natural Ophthalmics assures me that there is little-to-no chance the patient will experience an allergic reaction, or eye irritation, from the drops.

Create One-Stop-Shopping Experience

Once you decide that there is a best eye drop to prescribe to patients, the next step is making it as easy as possible for patients to obtain the drops. My practice does that by selling Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K right in the office. About 80 percent of my Ortho-K patients purchase the drops directly from me.

I dispense a starter package to all Ortho-K patients that includes a complimentary bottle of Natural

Ophthalmics Ortho-K. I do this to get patients off to a good start, and because I know once they try it, they will be happy with the wearing experience the drops facilitate, and will return to our office to make their first purchase of the drops.

Offering the patients the convenience of buying their Ortho-K drops directly from you is made easy by Natural Ophthalmics. There is no minimum order of inventory required by the company to purchase its products to sell. This minimal investment, coupled with the near-universality of purchase by my Ortho-K patients, enables me to make a 40 percent profit annually on sales of Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K.

The bottom line: You can best control the type, and quality, of drops Ortho-K patients use when you not only prescribe, but sell, the products yourself.

Have the Conversation with Patients

The conversation about the importance of using the specific eye drops I am prescribing, Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K, begins with me prescribing these specific drops, and only these drops. I don't tell patients that there is any other drop that could work equally well, because I honestly don't believe there is. "Use these drops, and if you need more, you can come to my office to buy more," I tell patients.

Emphasizing the importance of keeping ahead with supplies of the drops is essential. Most of my Ortho-K patients are children who sometimes don't tell their

parents they need more drops until after they have already run out. If that occurs on the weekend, when our office, like many doctors' offices, is closed, the parent then has no choice but to go to a drug store and get a lower-quality eye drop to use temporarily. When educating parents and children about the Ortho-K regimen, it helps to explain the significant role the drops play in the wearing process, and the ability of the patient to stick to the regimen that needs to be adhered to for success.

"Mrs. Smith," I might tell a parent, "you may want to get Johnny an extra bottle while you're here for a check-up, so that way there's less chance you'll run out unexpectedly at a time our office is closed. This is the only drop I prescribe for Ortho-K patients, so it is important to keep it in supply at home at all times."

Market Your First-Choice Ortho-K Drops to Patients

In addition to carefully explaining to Ortho-K patients and parents the importance of using Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K, I have fliers provided by Natural Ophthalmics in my reception area, and my staff has been trained to ask all Ortho-K patients if they need more supplies, including Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K, whenever Ortho-K patients visit the office for a check-up.

I rest assured that I am giving my patients the best drops for their eyes, and that I am enabling the most convenient experience for the patient by selling them the drops myself, before they ever leave my office.

Richard Zhang, MD, OD, PhD.FIAO, is the owner of Lexington Eye Care in Lexington, Mass. To contact: LexingtonEyeCare@hotmail.com.



It's Not Just Eyes: Doctor considers the whole patient at her holistic practice

By Robin Sapossnek, OD, FCOVD



Natural products allow you to consider a patient's whole well-being, beyond just their eyes.

For Robin Sapossnek, OD, FCOVD, eye care has always been about the whole person. In fact, she named her Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, practice Holistic Vision to

demonstrate that holistic care “has always been my orientation” in her 36 years of practicing.

Patients visiting this practice, north of Philadelphia, are aware of the array of therapies she offers, spanning natural and complementary medicines, high-tech therapies and the latest medications. She's become increasingly familiar with Natural Ophthalmics products, which means that many of her patients are learning about them, too. “I've used them in many ways, many times,” she says.

No Eye-Rolling

The practice offers traditional eye exams and eye care. It also provides vision therapy, vision rehabilitation, sports vision and orthokeratology. In addition, Dr. Sapossnek is schooled in alternative therapies. “People can talk to me about what they're doing and be confident I'm not going to roll my eyes,” she says.

As a full-scope provider, she recognizes that there are times when a prescribed medication might work best for a particular patient or condition, but there are other times when she and the patient want to consider the options. Natural Ophthalmics products “give us another way to help people that isn't just

reaching for a medication,” she says.

“My go-to products are the Natural Ophthalmics Allergy Drops and the Tear Stimulation Drops,” Dr. Sapossnek says. With the Allergy Drops, if a patient comes in with a condition “that is chronic and low grade, I'll offer that as a primary treatment,” she says.

“**Natural Ophthalmics products give us another way to help people that isn't just reaching for a medication.**”

With dry eye complaints, she'll often start a patient with Natural Ophthalmics Tear Stimulation Drops. She'll also suggest hot compresses and high-potency/high-quality fish oil supplements. “So it's a combination of treatment options, and nothing stands alone,” she says.

A recent patient wanted to move away from prescription allergy drops, so Dr. Sapossnek is slowly weaning her off of them in favor



of Natural Ophthalmics Allergy Drops. This patient's initial symptoms were severe, so Dr. Sapossnek started with prescription drops four times a day. “She wanted to get her treatments to a point where homeopathic drops were enough,” she says.

Boosting the Immune System

Homeopathic allergy drops trigger a response in the body's immune system, so they act differently than immunosuppressive medications. Patients often like that approach because they don't want to take more medication than is absolutely necessary.

Her approach is to reach for every kind of effective treatment. "Natural Ophthalmics is an adjunct to other traditional and alternative treatments I use," she says. "A patient's diet and lifestyle can play a role. When patients come in, I don't just take a medical history. I'm also interested in what supplements they're taking and what other health care providers they see."

Understanding the scope of a patient's care "lets me know what treatments can be effective," she says. "You have to consider risk and benefits and a patient's lifestyle and how to minimize medical interventions. One of the big advantages of Natural Ophthalmics products is that you don't have side effects. Plus, the cost is low."

She is able to offer patients a variety of options that will fit their lifestyle and to encourage them gently toward healthier choices in nutrition and physical activity. In turn, they leave her office feeling that she is focused on their overall well-being, not only on how well they can see the eye chart.

Ahh...Relief: From experience, doctor knows the discomfort of dry eyes-especially for women

By Suzanne Offen, OD



Your women patients will appreciate natural products tailored to their needs.

Suzanne Offen, OD, of Westfield, N.J., realizes now

that the discomfort she felt most of her life from wearing contact lenses was likely due to dry eye. “Nobody recognized dry eye back then,” she says. Once she was determined to treat her own dry eye she focused on providing that same relief to her patients. “Dry eye is so much more prevalent than I realized. In the stressed world we live in, it’s huge,” she says. While dry eye symptoms are a known factor in contact lens discomfort for postmenopausal women, Dr. Offen says the condition is more widespread than that. “I’ve seen teenagers who have dry eyes from spending so much time on the computer, BlackBerry or other PDA. Young adults and athletes often report symptoms, and stress and medications are contributing factors.”

While treating patients for their dry eye symptoms helps them immediately, there’s a benefit for her, as well. “These are often the patients who have stopped wearing contact lenses or their wearing time has decreased.” Keeping them as satisfied contact lens wearers is better for her bottom line and her appointment book, she says, noting that contact lens wearers are more frequent visitors and more profitable to the practice.

In her experience, dry eye symptoms are the leading cause of dropout, especially with soft toric lens wearers. These are patients she’d like to keep in specialty lenses through presbyopia. Losing them in their early 40’s is not part of her plan.

So she begins each exam with questions about the

patient’s contact lens wear. “Do you have dry, gritty-feeling eyes? Have you reduced the amount of time you can wear the lenses? How many hours do you sleep each night? Do you have allergies or are you on medications?” She also asks eyeglasses wearers if their vision feels less crisp by the end of the day, an indication that they may be suffering from dry eye symptoms, too.

What she finds is that a large number of patients provide answers that raise a red flag for dry eye.

Testing for dry eye is important so she can prescribe the therapy that will work best. “There are so many causes, and there can be different issues with the three separate layers of the tear film. Many patients don’t realize that they have dry eye until they have started on a dry eye regimen and feel the relief,” she says.

“**Many patients don’t realize that they have dry eye until they have started on a dry eye regimen and feel the relief**”

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Her recommendations are holistic and include advice to drink more water, take Omega3 supplements found in fish oil, scrub the eyelids and use medication. For many patients, she’ll recommend the Natural Ophthalmics homeopathic line of dry eye found in fish oil, scrub the eyelids and use medication. For many patients, she’ll recommend the Natural Ophthalmics homeopathic line of dry eye time drops, which I think is the greatest drop for contact lens wearers.”

Dry eye is a great referral source, she says. Once she treats a patient, she often sees friends and family. “They sometimes tell me that a previous doctor told them to use an over-the-counter eye drop without giving any further guidance. They tried five or so and gave up,” she says. They appreciate that Dr. Offen took the time to find a regimen that worked. Patient care has been enhanced, and the stage has been set for practice growth and long-term profitability.

Natural Eyecare: Enhance Patient Care & Build Your Practice

By Harvey Yamamoto, OD

Prescribe natural products to patients that you would use yourself.

Natural homeopathic eye drops can be part of your treatment plan for a variety of ocular conditions. A key to success: Offer drops for sale, and make it easy for patients to comply. Natural eye drops and pellets, free of artificial additives and chemicals, can enhance the comfort of your patients' eyes, and in the process, help improve vision by stabilizing the tear film. When patients are more comfortable, and feel they see better than they did before, your practice becomes a winner in their eyes—one they are likely to refer friends and family to. For those reasons, my practice only prescribes all-natural eye drops from Natural Ophthalmics, and have found these products to be nearly universally loved by patients, who may have tried other products with little, or no, success.

Try It Yourself

Both my daughter and son are ODs, so we are a family practice in the truest sense, and don't want to give patients products we wouldn't use ourselves.

My daughter specializes in pediatric optometry and my son specializes in ocular disease, while I specialize in fitting the most difficult-to-fit contact lens patients. We have an in-house contact lens lab where I can often be found making specialized lenses.

As a scientifically minded family, we were initially skeptical that all-natural products would be effective, let alone better than other products. That was before I tried Natural Ophthalmics' Cataract



Crystalline Lens Eye Drops on my own eyes 12 years ago. I found my vision enhanced, and my eyes kept more comfortable. We now prescribe those cataract-specific drops to all of our cataract patients.

Today, we have become a huge customer of all of Natural Ophthalmics' products. We invest around \$1,500 a month in Natural Ophthalmics products, and always make a return on that investment.

Enhance Medical Eyecare

We are a caring optometric practice that emphasizes the importance of thorough care. Each patient is given a complete medical eye exam annually, and patients at risk for diseases like macular degeneration are given education on the link between their diet and lifestyle and their risk of sight-threatening conditions. We show them how to eat less meat, and more fruit, vegetables and grains. We communicate the message that the health of the eyes, and the ability to maintain good vision, is tied to overall wellness. That holistic message is coupled with the latest in diagnostic technology and medical eyecare.

Let's say a patient comes in with complaints of itchy eyes, reading problems, glare and seeing spots.

The doctor will usually recommend an OCT exam to rule out retinal detachment, and then will carefully refract the patient and give recommendations on the types of lenses that would best suit their needs. Anti-reflective lenses are recommended to most patients, and allergy solutions, such as Natural Ophthalmics Allergy Desensitization Eye Drops, will be prescribed for itchy eyes.

Patients with cataracts are prescribed Natural Ophthalmics Cataract Crystalline Lens Eye drops, or

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Approximately seven out of 10 of our patients will be prescribed one, or more, Natural Ophthalmics products.
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pellets, depending on the severity of their cataract. Once the OCT exam is concluded, and PVD is found with visible floaters, the doctor will prescribe Natural Ophthalmics Floater pellets.

We do not keep track of the number of Natural Ophthalmics products we prescribe, but approximately seven out of 10 patients will be prescribed one, or more, Natural Ophthalmics products. We stock all of Natural Ophthalmics' medications in our office. One of my wife's jobs is to keep a stock of all the Natural Ophthalmics inventory on our shelves, and she generally orders additional inventory 2-3 times per month.

Create One-Stop Care

Just as we provide both full-scope medical eyecare in our office, along with an optical dispensary, we also want patients to find the products we prescribed under our roof.

We do our best to provide "one-stop shopping" for all our patients. Many of our colleagues will send patients to ophthalmologists for advanced medical eyecare, and then have them return for refraction and glasses and contact lenses. But if the patient doesn't need surgery, we try to provide everything the patient needs within our own office. The time

and convenience of our patients is important to us, so we want to ensure the care they receive from us is as simple as possible.

Natural Ophthalmics products have helped thousands of our patients receive that type of one-stop care. Most patients have allergy issues, and are prescribed Natural Ophthalmics Allergy Desensitization Eye Drops, which offers us a solution to their problem in just a few seconds. Most of our older female patients have dry eye challenges. We prescribe them Natural Ophthalmics Tear Stimulation Dry Eye Drops, and another solution to a problem has been arrived at within seconds, with three different dry eye drops from Natural Ophthalmics to choose from.

It is not unusual for our patients to be prescribed several Natural Ophthalmics products on their first visit. They tell their friends and family how we took care of all their needs in one visit—and how well we took care of those needs—and their friends and family come to see us, too.

Harvey Yamamoto, OD, is the owner of Harvey H. Yamamoto O.D., Inc., in Ontario, Calif. To contact him: harveyyamamoto@yahoo.com

Make Natural Eye Drops a Practice Builder

By Michael J. Dunn, OD

Natural homeopathic eye drops can be part of your treatment plan for a variety of ocular conditions. A key to success: Offer drops for sale, and make it easy for patients to comply.



Conditions such as dry eye, irritation from contact lens wear, cataracts and the occurrence of floaters afflicts a large and diverse cross section of optometric patients. Among the treatment plans I offer for these conditions are homeopathic eye drops from Natural Ophthalmics. I started selling the eye drops two years ago and have found they are a patient loyalty builder, with patients happy to find relief for ongoing conditions, and a revenue-generator, to boot. The introduction of these products was so powerful it gave my practice a new focus enabling me to close the dispensary and streamline an 18-staff office down to a staff consisting of just me and my wife who handles office management and reception. Here is how I provide these eye drops to patients and how I maximize their profitability.

Introduce the Eye Drops As a Standard Treatment Option

Natural Ophthalmics offers a wide range of products that are effective with floaters, cataracts, dry eye and contact lens wear. I have our patients use the oral eye spray (Total Ocular Spray) and the company's cataract eye drops for eight months and then have them back for a follow-up visit. At this point the least improvement in acuity is half a line better with the best improvement three full lines. I recommend this protocol to patients who do not want to have surgery or have eye conditions that would cause a

higher risk of vision loss post-surgery.

Natural Ophthalmic products come as drops, pellets and an oral spray. For people with dry eye syndrome I prescribe tear stimulant drops, for cataracts I prescribe Total Ocular Spray and cataract drops or cataract pellets. For corneal staining, I prescribe Ortho-K Thick for night time and Ortho K Thin for daytime with or without contact lens wear.

“ The biggest advantage of these products is that there are virtually no side effects and all of the eye drops can be used with or without contact lenses on. ”

The biggest advantage of these products is that there are virtually no side effects and all of the eye drops can be used with or without contact lenses on. There are no steroids in them, and they are only sold through professionals.

Start with a Conservative Investment

We started with a \$350 dollar inventory, but you could start with just one Natural Ophthalmics product at a time and gradually add eye drops and eye pellets for other conditions as your patients became more confident with the products. Doing it this way, your

original investment could be as low as \$60 with a net of \$60.

Natural Ophthalmics has a recommended price for their products and I am comfortable using it. None of their products retail for more than \$24.75. After two years of selling the drops, we now net more from nutraceuticals than contact lenses. With the correct presentation of the products, you should break even with the \$350 investment in three weeks. We now order \$150 to \$400 worth of wholesale products from Natural Ophthalmics every week.

Tie Eye Drops to Practice Branding

The holistic branding is perfect for my practice. We let our patients know that we provide holistic care, not just eyecare, with point-of-sale products and

show a DVD provided by Natural Ophthalmics in our reception room.

Educate Patients

First, I ask the patient if their symptoms are worth using the products. If they say no, then I suggest procedures they can do at home and over-the-counter products. If they say yes, then I explain how the products work. It may be my presentation, but over 50 percent of my patients will purchase at least one product. For example, Natural Ophthalmic's tear stimulation drops really interest patients when I tell them that there is "a girl version and a boy version based on hormones."

When patients purchase products for eye or general health conditions, I tell them to call me if they feel the product didn't help with their symptoms and I will give them full credit towards future services. Over the past two years I have had only five patients request credit toward future services.

Michael J. Dunn, OD, is the owner of The Family Vision Center in Lubbock, Texas. To contact him: familyvisioncenter@nts-online.net.

Total Ocular Function Oral Absorption Spray: This treatment contains the most important and highest quality ingredients to: protect against UV oxidation damage, increase oxygen and nutrient conversion to the aqueous, improve blood flow and provide important ingredients for lens clarity. Important: For patients with digestive problems or deficiencies such as reduced beneficial bacteria from antibiotics or those having difficulty swallowing pills. **Directions:** Administer three sprays to the back and roof of the mouth three times per day; swish with tongue as long as possible and swallow.

Homeopathic Oral Pellets: The same ingredients as the eye drops, but in oral form and one potency higher. Great for those having difficulty taking eye drops. Can be used in conjunction with the drops to increase effectiveness by applying dual administration routes with multiple potencies. Directions: Dissolve under tongue three pellets three times per day.



How Natural Eyecare Can Help Build a Profitable Dry Eye Practice

By Sheryl Simms, OD

Dry eye is growing, as the population ages, and as digital devices command our attention for long hours each day. Natural eyecare products provide an alternative way to treat this condition, while building practice revenues.



Dry eye is a growing challenge, with an aging population, and more people spending long hours on digital devices, and taking prescription medications that cause dryness. Fortunately, there are an array of treatments and services to help these patients. My practice has found natural eyecare from Natural Ophthalmics to be an important part of how we help our dry eye patients.

Even better, Natural Ophthalmics also has products for the other eye conditions and needs we help our patients address. Whether it's allergies, the changes experienced by aging eyes, or even ocular challenges associated with Ortho-K, I have a natural eyecare regimen I can prescribe.

The Natural Ophthalmics products that we sell in our office include Women's Tear Stimulation drops, Tear Stimulation Drops, Ortho K thick and Ortho K thin drops and Allergy drops.

Our practice, Urban Optique & Eyecare, is in dry Arizona, and we have a high population of patients with chronic, progressive dry eye. Out of all preservative-free drops recommended over many years, I have had the best feedback from patients about Natural Ophthalmics Tear Stimulation drop, which my patients have

found to be the most effective. It helps patients to feel more comfortable, and less drops are necessary than other manufacturers to achieve relief. I can also recommend Tear Stimulation drops to be used with contact lens wear.

Natural Ophthalmics Tear Stimulation drops on display in Dr. Simms' office. Dr. Simms says her patients appreciate having a natural eye care product used as part of the practice's dry eye treatments. As I fit patients with Ortho-K in our office, I only prescribe the Ortho K Thick and Thin drops for insertion. Using a preservative-free drop is a must when applying the lens because a preservative will create disruption on the cornea. Ortho K wearers can use either drop during the day because it not only lubricates the eye; it has a natural anti-inflammatory effect.

Allergies have become more common in the "Valley of the Sun," where my practice is located, so Natural Ophthalmic Allergy drops are recommended for these patients. The Natural Ophthalmics Allergy drop treats the eye irritation, and does not increase dry eye symptoms like other allergy drops on the market.

My office sells approximately 50 bottles of Natural Ophthalmic products per month. From a business standpoint, it has created a new revenue stream.

Create One-Stop-Shopping & Protect Patients

Having patients purchase in our office keeps them from choosing an inappropriate drop over the counter. I explain to patients that a preservative can create dryness, so it's very

“Whether it's allergies, the changes experienced by aging eyes, or even ocular challenges associated with Ortho-K, I have a natural eyecare regimen I can prescribe.”

important to choose a preservative-free drop. In addition, other lubricating drops are only temporary, whereas Natural Ophthalmic Tear Stimulation drops help your eyes not only to be lubricated, but to increase tear production.

Show How Natural Eyecare Fits Into Overall Treatment

Our dry eye treatment includes many products and services, so a detailed brochure is provided to help patients remember the dry eye protocol and how the drops should be used. Pictures of the products are on the brochure, as well, for recognition of the specific products we recommend.

Display Prominently & Feature Online

The Natural Ophthalmics products are displayed in our reception area. We place a large emphasis on dry eye treatment in our office, so there are informational patient brochures throughout the office. The staff is also well versed in discussing dry eye treatment.

Online brochures and information on our web site is how we advertise Natural Ophthalmic products outside our office. But the best advertisement is patient feedback. We have spouses, siblings and friends of patients come to the office to purchase drops because of the recommendation from our patients!

Educate Patients About Natural Eyecare

The discussion I have with patients regarding dry eye starts with the benefits of natural treatment. I explain that omega 3s will thicken the tear layer, hot compresses will melt away the blockage in our glands and allow better layers to our tears, and the Natural Ophthalmic drops will reduce tear evaporation rate and increase tear production. We offer heated lid massage in our office, along with lid margin cleansing. Each treatment recommendation is critical for improvement because not just one will solve the dry eye issue. As a dry eye patient myself, I

explain that I use these products, and receive these services, too.

Most patients are truly receptive to homeopathic treatment, and prefer the natural approach. They are interested in knowing that the drops are effective and that there are no side effects. When I discuss the Natural Ophthalmics homeopathic drops, patients are impressed that we prescribe natural products. They are comfortable with natural treatment because there are no side effects.

Some patients only associate eye drops with red and dry eyes, so I also educate on the role the right eye drop can play in keeping patients in contact lenses comfortable, and the key role drops play in making Ortho-K a success.

The key to long-term contact lens wear is comfort and clear vision. I explain that because there is a high contact lens drop out rate due to dry eye, it is important to build the tear layer, so patients are seeing the best and feel most comfortable in their lenses. Natural Ophthalmics drops are safe and effective, and help patients to be successful with contact lens wear. We receive more patient referrals due to patients having great success with contact lens wear than we do for any other service.

Sheryl Simms, OD, is the owner of Urban Optique & Eyecare in Chandler, Ariz. To contact her: urbanoptique@gmail.com.



Tear Stimulation Dry Eye Drops for Women & Forté:

Two unique eye drops which stimulate the production of all three tear film layers while supporting the health of the cornea, conjunctiva and eyelid. Two separate formulas, one specifically for women.

Improve Patients' Vision & Comfort Naturally

By Xiaoyin Sun, OD

Patients remember your practice when you improve their lives with natural products.

Besides offering comprehensive eye care, **Xiaoyin Sun, OD**, a member in the Orthokeratology Academy of America, has something else that her patients value.



"I'm originally from China, and my Asian patient base is big since myopia prevalence is high in the Asian community, at between 79.3 percent and 92 percent, according to multiple studies," she says, noting that ethnicity, occupation, environment and even genetic makeup are factors. "People are looking for Mandarin-speaking doctors to express their concerns of eye health," she says. Her practice, Dr. Sun Eye Care, is in Plainsboro, New Jersey, right next to Princeton University. About half of the town's 23,000 residents are Asian.

Natural Ophthalmics products are a key part of how she helps patients take care of their eyes. "We have a big population of orthokeratology candidates," she says, "who are facing the challenge with progressing myopia. I introduce the Ortho-K formulation eye drops from Natural Ophthalmics to help lubricate and to prevent corneal damage." She recommends using the drops two to six times a day, depending on each patient's condition.

As part of the treatment, "the first day we introduce them to the Ortho-K Thick Eye Drops, because the new lens wearer will feel more comfortable." After the patient has time to adjust, she'll introduce the Thin Eye Drops. Many patients use both-at different times of day.

In myopia progression, prevention is the key; the sooner therapy begins, the sooner therapeutic

and refractive goals will be reached. Her youngest ortho-K patient was 5-1/2 years old. "Natural Ophthalmics products are really helpful because they're all natural with no adverse side effects," she says. When she can make patients comfortable with the ortho-K treatment, they are more likely to be compliant, she adds.

She also suggests Natural Ophthalmics products for treating dry eye syndrome. For a variety of reasons, it's a frequent complaint among patients of all age groups. "I talk about dry eye every time a patient visits, making sure he or she understands the cause and result. Dry eye is often a worsening condition because of the patient's age, higher use

of electronics and the changing of the tear structure," she says. "I visit a senior care center every month, where all the residents complain about dry eye discomfort."

**“
I talk about
dry eye every time
a patient visits,
making sure he or she
understands the cause
and result.
”**

She always stocks a supply of products. "It's good to give patients the convenience of getting it right away, and patients always trust a doctor's supply with a fresh date and exchange warranty," she says. "I love having the Natural Ophthalmics products in my practice and ready for all patients who need them."

Dr. Sun was first introduced to Natural Ophthalmics around 2011, when she began her practice. She attended an orthokeratology conference and met **Linda Axelrod**, who was there representing Natural Ophthalmics. "I talked to Linda and to some of my colleagues who use the products and definitely liked them," she says. "So I started to use it for myself and my family."

Dr. Sun finds satisfaction in helping patients with dry eye. "That's what I like to do, to contribute to improving people's vision and eye health every day."

Prescribe & Sell the Natural Products Patients Want

By Marc Grossman, OD



In an age of processed food and chemical-based pharmaceuticals, prescribing and selling a natural eyecare product is a welcome alternative.

Natural eyecare products empower you to give patients a much-needed break from artificial additives and chemicals. In my office, we pride ourselves on having Natural Ophthalmics products to prescribe and sell. Patients trust the products they buy in our office, and we know we are giving them a high-quality product that won't irritate their eyes, rather than just sending them to the nearest drug store to see what they can find.

Natural products, sold by a company you can trust, is one of the ways you create satisfied, loyal patients who are likely to stick with your practice and refer others.

Using Natural Ophthalmics products as part of an integrated holistic approach to eyecare helps differentiate your office from optical stores and other eye doctors' offices. I am booked four months ahead, as many people want this type of natural, integrative eyecare.

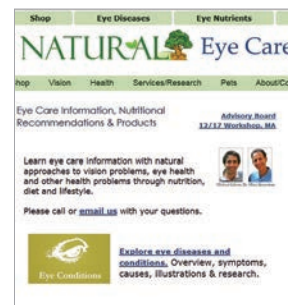
The page on Dr. Grossman's practice web site educating patients about the natural eyecare products he sells. Dr. Grossman says patients are eager to experience the kind of integrative medicine that selling natural products allows.



Market the Advantage of Natural Products

Patients already understand the benefits of eating food that is natural and organic, so most are primed to hear a message about the advantages of natural eyecare products.

My practice devotes a special page on our web site to natural eyecare products from Natural Ophthalmics. The information we provide is broken into links to click on for specific eye conditions, ranging from blepharitis to computer eye strain, diabetic eye disease, light sensitivity, and beyond. It's important that when you publicize the natural eyecare products you sell that you give patients the details on how specific visual and eye health challenges relate to the products you have prescribed.



The patient first learns the relationship between what you have prescribed, and their eye condition, in the exam room, and then if you have a specialized portion of your web site detailing the products, you can refer them online to information you put together yourself, or personally reviewed, to learn more.

The products are prominently displayed in our office on a special shelf in the exam room, so I can easily take the product off the shelf as I prescribe it, and I am personally handing it to the patient.

Natural Products for Nearly Every Eyecare Need

One of the reasons I like Natural Ophthalmics is not only are the products made with natural, irritant-

free ingredients, but there's a product for nearly every patient need.

My practice sells Natural Ophthalmics Women's and Forte Tear Stimulation Drops, Allergy Desensitization Drops, Cataract Crystalline Lens Eye Drops, Ortho-K Thin and Thick Eye Drops and Floater, Cataract, Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration Pellets.

Small Investment, Big Benefit

We purchase approximately 100 bottles of Natural Ophthalmics products per month at around \$600 monthly, and we generate around \$1,200 per month from selling those products. That means we have at least a 50 percent profit margin.

Natural Ophthalmics products on the shelf in Dr. Grossman's office. Dr. Grossman says it helps having the products right in the exam room with him, so he can personally hand the products to patients as he prescribes them.



Let Patients Know You Believe in These Products

Selling natural eyecare products in your office requires that as the doctor you stand behind the products. Fortunately, I am such an advocate of Natural Ophthalmics products that I serve on the company's advisory board.

So, when I prescribe these products, I'm being honest when I tell patients that I consider the products to be the best that I can prescribe for them. Emphasizing your personal endorsement of the specific brand of products you sell is important because doing so lessens the chances of the patient deciding to just look for something they believe is comparable at the drug store.

“
Natural products, sold by a company you can trust, is one of the ways you create satisfied, loyal patients who are likely to stick with your practice and refer others.”
”

I tell patients: “These are the best homeopathic products in eyecare, and I believe these products will speed the healing process for your eye condition.”

I also explain to patients that I believe in an integrated approach to eyecare in which the eyes are seen in the context of the total health of the patient. When you believe in an integrative approach, prescribing natural products becomes more important because you know exactly what is in the products, which means there is less chance of an unknown chemical causing an unwanted side effect.

In addition, I emphasize the difference between the healing power of Natural Ophthalmics products and those the patient can buy at the drug store: “Most of the over-the-counter products you'll find at the drug store just treat the symptoms of your eye condition. These drops I have prescribed help heal the condition, and not just suppress the symptoms.”

Prepare Staff to Sell Natural Eyecare Products

It's not enough for you as doctor to be knowledgeable about, and believe in, the natural eyecare products you sell. Your staff also needs to be on board. Getting them engaged in selling natural eyecare products means educating them about the benefits, and maybe even giving them the products to try themselves. If they try the products, and have a positive experience, they go from being fact-based experts to being personal advocates and champions. Patients can tell the difference between a disinterested voice and a passionate believer, and are more likely to purchase from a believer.

In my office, we train patients to be knowledgeable about how the natural eyecare products we sell help heal patients' eyes, give them the products to try themselves, and explain to them how the products tie into our integrative approach to medical eyecare.

Patients Are Eager to Learn About Homeopathic Treatments

By Elise Brisco, OD, FAAO, FCOVD

Shouldn't your patients be getting their eyecare information from you?



Elise Brisco, OD, FAAO, FCOVD, became a clinical certified homeopath (CCH) because she felt that incorporating an integrative medicine approach in her practice made a lot of sense.

"Homeopathy boosts your immune system. It's immunosupportive, not immunosuppressive. I use homeopathic medicine because it's safe and effective," she says.

Homeopathic medicine can trigger or catalyze the body to heal. "You are constantly being bombarded by bacteria, viruses and environmental pollutants, which can stress your immune system and knock it out of balance. Then you're more likely to get sick."

Repeated infections, such as blepharitis, for example, are connected to the immune system, too. A simple example is dry eye. "I used to prescribe nonpreserved artificial tears a lot. But those are a replacement and substitute for real tears. Your eyes might feel good immediately after using the drops, but there's no therapeutic benefit," she says. When she saw an advertisement about the tear stimulation drops from Natural Ophthalmics, she said that made more sense to her. "These stimulate your body to produce your own tears."

Natural Ophthalmics offers a variety of drops, including drops formulated specifically for women and orthoK lens wearers, as well as allergy desensitization eye drops.

In her practice, many of her patients are in the movie and television industry. "These people are working on big-budget films under tremendous pressure. They'd come in repeatedly with blepharitis and conjunctivitis. I used to treat them with antibiotics, but the underlying issue was that they were all highly stressed and fatigued. The body can't fight infections under those conditions," she says.



She began using the Natural Ophthalmics' tears products with these patients, as well as with those who have had chemotherapy and who have Sjogren's Syndrome, she says. She's working with an ophthalmologist now doing a double-blind controlled placebo trial with their co-managed LASIK patients. "I want answers, so this seemed like a good trial to take on, and we both want to know if we can help stimulate tears in LASIK patients."

“I'm not against drugs and surgery; in fact, it's never an either-or situation. I use all the tools available that I was trained to use as an optometrist, but I also include homeopathy.”

Dr. Brisco says that her interest in complementary and alternative medicine, often referred to as CAM, became more pronounced when she became a mother, because her son regularly developed infections. "I didn't want to keep pouring antibiotics into his system," she says. She had already found that acupuncture, osteopathic herbs and homeopathy had helped her battle some of her own allergies, so she began researching it and certification as a CCH in earnest.

Patients are very responsive to homeopathic options, she says. "There's a movement to more

natural alternatives. We see that in organic foods, renewable fuels and natural medicine.” In fact, “people spend more money out of pocket on CAMs than they do on traditional medicine because they want to help their bodies help themselves. I’m not against drugs and surgery; in fact, it’s never an either or situation. I use all the tools available that I was trained to use as an optometrist, but I also include homeopathy. It’s not A or B; my formula is that A + B = C,” she says.

Natural Ophthalmics’ products come mostly in eye drops or pellets and are available only through a health care provider. There are tear-stimulation eye drops and drops for crystalline lens care, as well as pellets for treating conditions such as ocular allergies, cataracts and eye fatigue.

According to the National Institute of Health’s National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, about four in 10 adults in the U.S. use CAM therapies, with the percentage greater among women and persons with higher levels of education and higher incomes.

Finding out about a patient’s emotional and physical health, as well as their lifestyle habits, lets her act as “a true primary care doctor,” Dr. Brisco says. “We should educate our patients that vision is part of their overall health, because no part of the body exists in isolation from the rest of the mind and body.”

How do Allergy Drops work?

Simply stated — the drops work very similarly to the allergy desensitization treatments that allergy doctors use. The difference being that the homeopathic drops work very quickly and feel wonderful to use.

How do I explain this to my patient?

“Patient’s name... the symptoms you describe, and the appearance of your eye tissue, point to ocular allergies. We have several treatment options ranging from over the counter eye drops to prescription drugs. As a first choice, I recommend a homeopathic eye drop which can eliminate the allergy response naturally. This is a wiser choice than the other treatments which only mask or suppress the allergy symptoms. The treatment I recommend are eye drops made by Natural Ophthalmics. They are preservative free and the best quality drops that I can recommend. I am going to write down the name of the drops and you can pick them up today, at the front desk. Directions will be on the product.”

Differentiate Your Practice and Teach Patients Something New

By Suzanne Offen, OD FCOVD

Products and services that emphasize health and wellness drive practice growth



When **Suzanne Offen, OD FCOVD**, of Westfield, New Jersey, makes a recommendation to a patient for a homeopathic product such as Natural Ophthalmics' Ortho-K Thin eye drops, she does so "with a lot of

confidence," she says. She's had more than a decade of experience recommending homeopathic options to patients. Natural eye care and wellness are important topics to her and her patients. On her website and practice Facebook page, she posts regularly about nutrition, wellness and healthy eyes for the whole family.

"I consider myself a primary care optometrist. We do a lot of basic care for patients," she says. She sees infants to adults and refers them out for care as needed. Her practice, which she started in 1987, has been pulling patients in by word-of-mouth recommendations for years.

Her interest in setting the practice apart by providing differentiated products and services has helped her growth. Natural eye care is one such area. More than 85 percent of Americans use natural supplements for wellness, and more than 50 percent use these products for treating health conditions, according to a survey conducted by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, a division of the National Institutes of Health.

Natural Ophthalmics has a wide product range, available in eye drops or pellets, for tear stimulation,

allergies and cataracts, for example. "I've been using these products in my practice for about 10 to 15 years," she says. Offering homeopathic products has also set her practice apart, she says. "I'm one of the few doctors who does work in orthokeratology, and I do a lot of contact lenses," she says. "I used homeopathic products before a lot of other people did. I'm a believer in homeopathy. I find it to be very helpful for patients, and the products are less expensive, too, than prescription medications."

Her recommendation of homeopathic products and natural eye care is complementary to her high-tech, high-touch practice. For example, it's a key element of her growing orthokeratology practice. Many parents in her area are interested in orthokeratology to slow down the rate of myopia progression for their children. To ensure that her patients are comfortable, which she says increases compliance with the regimen, her practice packages the two formulations of Natural Ophthalmics Ortho-K eye drops. The thick drop is used just prior to inserting the lenses for the night, and one drop can be added

once the lens has been inserted. It helps keep the eyes and eyelid feeling smooth overnight. The thin drops are used upon waking to make it easier to remove the ortho-k lenses. The thin formula can also be used during the day as a lubricant. These are the only products she recommends for her orthokeratology patients. "Since I've been using them, I haven't had patients

have any issues with their lenses," she says. "That's something to brag about. They've worked out really well."

She says that the soothing aspect of the thin drops helps provide a smooth corneal surface, which patients notice. In fact, she recommends the

“
Dry eye is the main reason why some people stop wearing contact lenses.
 ”

Ortho-K Thin drops for any contact lens wearer who is struggling with comfort issues. “Dry eye is the main reason why some people stop wearing contact lenses. There are so many causes for dry eye, and there can be different issues with the three separate layers of the tear film,” she says. Her dry eye practice features LipiFlow for more advanced cases of evaporative dry eye disease, but she routinely starts patients with a recommendation to use the Ortho-K Thin drops. “Many patients don’t realize that they have dry eye until they have started on a dry eye regimen and feel the relief. I personally use Ortho-K Thin drops, which I think are the greatest drops for contact lens wearers.”



Incorporating recommendations for natural eye care and wellness products is easy. There are no contraindications for these drops, so they can be an appropriate first-line treatment option for many patients, she says.

Beyond Revenue Impact

Dr. Suzanne Offen has been offering patients Natural Ophthalmics products through her office for so long, her staff has developed a good sense of when she’ll make the recommendation. “My staff is well-versed in the product line,” she says. Having the products for sale in her office undoubtedly adds to her incremental revenue per patient, although she says that she doesn’t measure the dollar impact. “It’s a contributing factor,” she says.

But even more important than the bottom line impact is that she knows that patients will purchase the exact products she’s recommending and be able to start using them right away. The conversations spurred by these recommendations are also learning opportunities for patients. “They’re interested in health and wellness, so when I can provide information and a solution for their eye care needs, that’s very helpful.

Doctor's Reputation for Natural Eye Care Draws in Patients

By Susan Moss, OD



When patients know you can provide natural options for care, they will choose you instead of a competitor.

Susan Moss, OD, puts her holistic approach to eye care front and center at her practice

in Bellaire, Texas. And she's found plenty of patients who want that kind of therapy.

At least 80 percent of her patients use homeopathic products, she says. She provides natural products to treat a wide range of conditions, including dry eye, floaters, corneal erosion and allergies. Dr. Moss is a member of the American Academy of Orthokeratology and Myopia Control, the American Naturopathic Medical Association and the Ocular Nutrition Society.

While there are other ODs who provide some homeopathic treatments, integrative medicine has been the focus of her practice for more than a decade. Natural Ophthalmics is a main supplier for her practice. The products "are wonderful and they're reasonably priced," she says. A patient recently came in complaining that the cheapest prescription drops she could find cost \$150. Homeopathic products "are less than \$25, and they work," Dr. Moss says.

She also says homeopathic products are generally easier on the patients. Using homeopathic drops is a total win-win. Patients get better, and the drops are a reasonable price.

For dry eye patients, for example, over-the-counter artificial tears, with



or without preservatives, provide a replacement and substitute for real tears. The relief might be immediate, but it's typically short-term, says Dr. Moss. Natural Ophthalmics Tear Stimulation Drops work therapeutically to stimulate the eyes to moisturize with their own mechanisms. In others words, she tells patients, they support and stimulate the immune system rather than mask it or even suppress it. These drops are non-preserved and do not sting, and they are great for pediatric patients.

The Allergy Desensitization Drops similarly stimulate the body's own ability to eliminate symptoms of ocular allergies. Unlike treatments that are aimed at blocking the histamine process and suppressing the symptoms, these drops stimulate the eyes and body to counteract the allergy process naturally.

“Natural Ophthalmics products are wonderful, and reasonably priced.”

”

Dr. Moss also has a robust orthokeratology practice. Natural Ophthalmics offers two varieties of Ortho-K Drops, Thick and Thin. The Thick formula is often used just prior to inserting the lens at night and also after the lens has been inserted. The Thin formula is used upon waking to facilitate lens removal and can be used during the day to alleviate dryness, redness or discomfort. Having these products available improves her Ortho-K patients' satisfaction and overall experience, she says.



Dr. Moss would like to see the use of homeopathic treatments increase. She'd like to see the profession add a certification process so other ODs can adopt holistic therapies. Until then, Natural Ophthalmics offers doctors an easy way to dispense natural eye care.

Go from
“Arrghh!”

to

“Ahhh!”

Rather than sampling lubricants and prescribing antihistamines for dry eye or allergy—now you can dispense therapeutic treatments that your patients will prefer.

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