

Special Section: Dry Eye

New intracanalicular punctum plug relieves dry eye

New Product Focus

By Nancy Groves

Reviewed by Jacqueline Griffiths, MD, Edward D. Glinski, DO, MBA, and William Trattler, MD

The Form Fit intracanalicular punctum plug (Oasis Medical) is a new option for patients who need long-term relief from dry eye problems, offering advantages such as patient tolerability, uniform sizing, and easy insertion and removal, according to several specialists familiar with the recently approved product.

Form Fit plugs are “well tolerated by the patients, and they’re completely easy to put in,” said Jacqueline Griffiths, MD, medical director of NewView Laser Eye, Reston, VA.

Since the punctum plug expands to fit the punctal cavity, one size fits every patient and there is no need to use a sizer to get the correct fit, which is convenient for the physician and patient, Dr. Griffiths said.

“I like these plugs because they permanently close the punctae and they’re inserted completely in, so they’re not going to fall out,” she said, and added that other styles of permanent plugs could sometimes inadvertently be rubbed out of the eye when a patient came into contact with the cap or ridge.

Dr. Griffiths has been using the Form Fit plugs for several months, since they became commercially available following last fall’s FDA approval.

The Form Fit plug is made of a hydrogel that expands into a soft, pliable, gelatinous material when it comes into contact with tear film.

Unlike silicone plugs, it does not have a cap.

The punctum plug comes preloaded on an inserter whose polyimide tip is inserted into the punctum; the inserter handle is then compressed to expel the plug.

Once inserted, the Form Fit plug absorbs tear fluid and expands about 20 times in volume over a period of approximately 10 minutes, filling and conforming to the vertical canaliculus.

“My threshold for using punctal plugs is low, and it’s become even lower with these [Form Fit],” Dr. Griffiths said. She often uses them in combination with cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion 0.05% (Restasis, Allergan), since it takes about a month before the drug becomes effective and the plugs help provide relief in the interim as well as in conjunction with drops on an ongoing basis.

“Patients get immediate relief,” Dr. Griffiths said. “I’ve gotten feedback from patients that they really like the results, that they have to use the artificial tears less often, and that they don’t feel the plugs at all.”

“This is my plug of choice unless I see that the dry eye situation is a temporary problem, in which case I would use the 3-month plug,” Dr. Griffiths added.

Many patients are apprehensive about getting punctum plugs and fear that the procedure will be invasive but are pleasantly surprised at how easily the Form Fit plugs are inserted, Dr. Griffiths said, unlike silicone permanent plugs that sometimes required extended dilation and a longer, more difficult insertion process.

“There are some drawbacks, as there are to any product, but very few,” she said. In about 2% of the instances in which she has attempted to insert a plug, it has become stuck on the

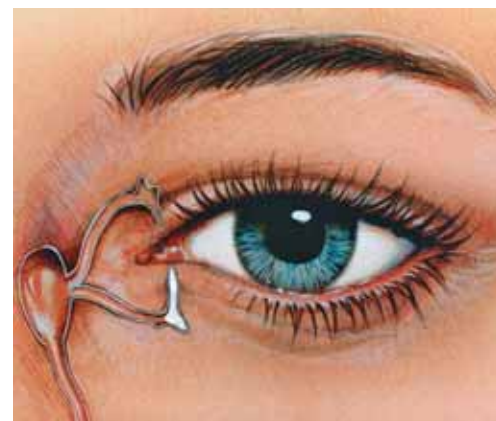


Figure 1 Since the Form Fit plug expands to fit the punctal cavity, one size fits every patient and there is no need to use a sizer to get the correct fit, which is convenient for the physician and patient. (Photo courtesy of Oasis Medical)

end of the injector and had to be discarded.

Dr. Griffiths described this as a manufacturing problem with the slightly sticky hydrogel material and added that she had not experienced any patient-related problems with the Form Fit. “The manufacturer has responded to this problem and redesigned its injector recently [to address this issue],” Griffiths said.

Fares well in dry, gritty regions

Edward D. Glinski, DO, MBA, Heritage Eye Associates and Surgicenter of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City, also uses Form Fit plugs extensively in his practice. He implanted about 120 Form Fit plugs in the first 2 months that the product was commercially available, with such heavy use attributable to the high incidence of dry eye in the harsh Oklahoma environment and his openness toward any new technology that might help his patients.

"We have a huge dry eye problem. We're in the Sunbelt, the Windbelt, the Tornadobelt. It's very gritty and dry," he said.

Before the Form Fit became available, he typically used the long-term intracanalicular plugs that are absorbed over 2 months. He refers to these as "seasonal" plugs, while the Form Fit is an extended-duration plug that should last indefinitely.

"It's a good solution because it's long term and the patients don't have to come back for a seasonal reinsertion. So far so good," Dr. Glinski said. "I like them, and the patients seem to tolerate them well. I've got the technique down, and it works.

"Another advantage of the Oasis plug is that once you get it in, it's easy to remove," he said. "The material that forms in the intracanalicular space is very mucinoid, so if you irrigate it out, it's easy to get rid of."

However, in his first few months of experience with the Form Fit, he had not needed to remove any plugs. In that period, he also observed no adverse events among patients with the plugs implanted. Because the product is new, long-term follow-up information is not available.

William Trattler, MD, Center for Excellence in Eye Care, Miami, regards punctum plugs as a useful form of adjunctive therapy for dry eye but has noticed that a few patients develop irritation from the tops or caps of certain styles of plugs.

"These Form Fit plugs are useful because they can be used in patients that have irritation or are uncomfortable with standard punctum plugs," he added.

While he prefers to use standard plugs that can be seen after placement, Dr. Trattler has begun incorporating the Form Fit plugs into his practice by switching to this style when patients develop irritation or pain or can't retain plugs in their eye.

So far, he reported, patients have been happy with the Form Fit plugs and the plugs have stayed in place. ○ T

FYI

Edward D. Glinski, DO, MBA

Phone: 405/636-1508

Fax: 405/636-1239

www.oklahomaeyes.com

Dr. Glinski did not indicate a financial interest.

Jacqueline Griffiths, MD

Phone: 703/834-9777

Fax: 703/834-8187

E-mail: jgriffiths@newviewlasereye.com

Dr. Griffiths does not have a financial interest in the product or company.

William Trattler, MD

Phone: 305/598-2020

Fax: 305/274-0426

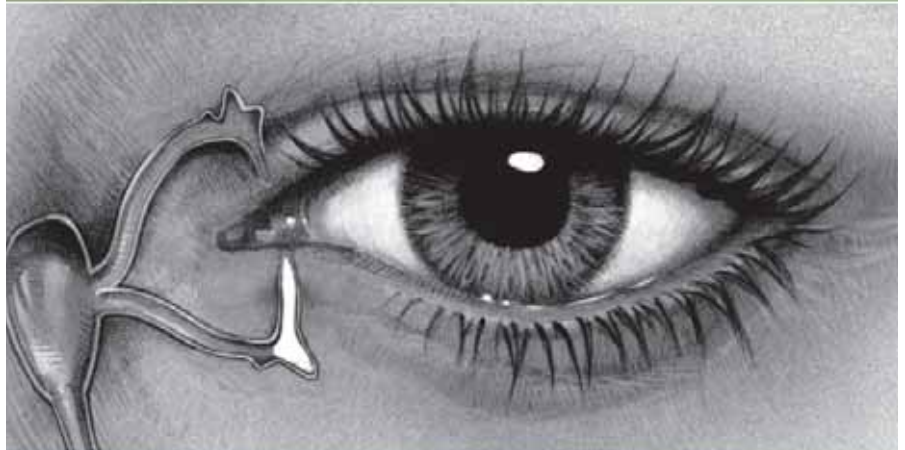
E-mail: wtrattler@earthlink.com Dr. Trattler does not have any financial interest in Oasis Medical.

FORM FIT™
INTRACANALICULAR PLUG

One Size Fits All

There's a new advance in Dry Eye treatment.
It's called Form Fit™.

- No Forceps
- No Broken Plugs
- Easy To Remove



Contact us today for a **FREE** sample
and to receive 15% OFF your first
box of Form Fit™ plugs.

TEL 909.305.5400

FAX 909.305.9987

www.OasisMedical.com

OASIS®



Providing the highest quality products to the eye care professional

© Reprinted from OPHTHALMOLOGY TIMES, May 15, 2005 AN ADVANSTAR PUBLICATION Printed in U.S.A.

Copyright Notice Copyright by Advanstar Communications Inc. Advanstar Communications Inc. retains all rights to this article. This article may only be viewed or printed (1) for personal use. User may not actively save any text or graphics/photos to local hard drives or duplicate this article in whole or in part, in any medium. Advanstar Communications Inc. home page is located at <http://www.advanstar.com>.