Blocked Tear Duct

A baby’s tear duct is very tiny. It can be easily blocked. Tears are formed above the outer edge of the eye. The tears move across the eye when blinking. They drain into the tear duct near the inner part of the eye into the nose.

Signs of a blocked tear duct:

- Lots of tears in one eye or both when your baby is not crying.
- "Sleep" in the eyes or matted eyes.

Things to do at home:

- Keep your child’s eyes clean. Wash your hands. Clean your child’s eyes with warm water and a clean washcloth or cotton ball. Wipe from the inside of the eye by the nose to the outside. Be sure to use a new washcloth or cotton ball each time you clean your child’s eyes.

- Massage the tear duct. Use your finger to gently rub under your child’s eye by the nose. Then lightly drag your finger along the side of your child’s nose. This should be done 3 to 4 times a day.

- You may need to massage the tear duct until your child gets older. As the tear duct gets bigger, it is less likely to become blocked. Talk with your child’s doctor about this at his regular checkups.

Call your doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if:

- Your child has yellow or green pus coming from his eyes.
- Your child has a fever higher than 101° F (38.3° C).
- Your child has redness or swelling of the eyelids.
- Your child acts sick or fussy.
- You have questions or concerns about this problem.