



25 Breakthroughs in Georgia



NO. 2:

The only prescription for treating chronic dry eye

Your vision blurs. Ordinary light seems harsh. Your eyes feel scratchy and irritated.

These are the unpleasant symptoms of chronic dry eye, a condition that affects as many as 25 million people in the U.S. alone. If left untreated, it can lead to inflammation that can damage the eye's surface.

One of the most commonly prescribed treatments for dry eye is **Restasis**, a breakthrough drug based on a discovery at the University of Georgia.

While other eye drops provide artificial tears to temporarily lubricate the eye, Restasis increases the eye's ability to produce its own tears. So Restasis doesn't just alleviate symptoms — it helps treat the cause.

At UGA's College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Renee Kaswan began the quest to treat chronic dry eye in dog patients, a condition that may cause canine blindness. She discovered that an ophthalmic formula containing cyclosporine, an immunosuppressant and anti-inflammatory, had positive results.

Major pharmaceutical company Allergan developed the UGA innovation for the human health market, and Restasis was approved by the FDA in 2002. Restasis eye drops were the first – and remain the only – FDA-approved prescription medicine for dry eye today.

A veterinary product making use of Dr. Kaswan's innovation is available to animal owners as Optimune.

"25 Breakthroughs in Georgia" celebrates 25 years of the Georgia Research Alliance. GRA expands research and commercialization capacity in Georgia's universities to launch new companies, create high-value jobs and transform lives. More: GRA.org