CLAIMS

1. A method of treating allergic conjunctivitis in a patient in need thereof, the method comprising administering to the patient a sustained release biodegradable intracanalicular insert comprising a hydrogel and a glucocorticoid, wherein the occurrence of increase in intraocular pressure in a population of patients is about 5% or less.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the glucocorticoid comprises dexamethasone.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert is preservative-free.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the ophthalmic insert releases from about 0.3 mg to about 0.5 mg of dexamethasone following administration.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the ophthalmic insert releases about 0.4 mg of dexamethasone following administration.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein the ophthalmic insert releases about 0.3 mg to about 0.5 mg of dexamethasone for up to 30 days following administration.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert releases a therapeutically effective amount of glucocorticoid for a period of up to about 28 days.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert releases a therapeutically effective amount of glucocorticoid for a period of at least about 28 days.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the hydrogel comprises a polymer network comprising one or more crosslinked polymer units of polyethylene glycol, polyethylene oxide, polypropylene oxide, polyvinyl alcohol, poly (vinylpyrrolidinone), polylactic acid, polylactic-co-glycolic acid, random or block copolymers or combinations or mixtures of any of these, or one or more units of polyaminoacids, glycosaminoglycans, polysaccharides, or proteins.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the polymer network comprises one or more crosslinked polyethylene glycol units having an average molecular weight in the range from about 2,000 to about 100,000 Daltons.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the polyethylene glycol units have an average molecular weight of about 20,000 Daltons.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the polymer network comprises one or more crosslinked 2- to 10-arm polyethylene glycol units.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the polymer network comprises 4-arm polyethylene glycol units.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein the polymer network is formed by reacting an electrophilic group-containing multi-arm-polymer precursor with a nucleophilic group-containing crosslinking agent.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the nucleophilic group is an amine group and the electrophilic group is an activated ester group.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the electrophilic group- containing multi-arm-polymer precursor is 420kPEG-SG and the crosslinking agent is trilysine acetate.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert comprises a visualization agent.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the visualization agent is a fluorophore.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the visualization agent is fluorescein.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert in a dry state comprises one or more phosphate, borate or carbonate salt(s).

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert is free or substantially free of anti-microbial preservatives.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert has an essentially cylindrical shape.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the occurrence of increase in intraocular pressure in a population of patients is about 4%.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein the occurrence of increase in intraocular pressure in a population of patients is about 3.2%.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the hydrogel lessens ocular itching of the patient.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert provides a therapeutically effective ocular itching score as measured using a modified Conjunctival Allergen Challenge Model.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert provides an ocular itching score of less than about 2.5 as measured using a modified Conjunctival Allergen Challenge Model.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert provides an ocular itching score of less than about 2.1 on Day 8 of use when measured at 3 minutes, 5 minutes or 7 minutes post-challenge using a modified Conjunctival Allergen Challenge Model.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert provides an ocular itching score of about 1.7 to about 2.1 on Day 8 of use when measured at 3 minutes, 5 minutes or 7 minutes post-challenge as measured using a modified Conjunctival Allergen Challenge Model.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein the insert provides a reduction in ocular itching on Day 8, at 3 minutes, 5 minutes and 7 minutes post challenge as compared to an inert insert using an ocular hyperemia scale.