

806 is once again affixed to the external portion of the balloon punctal plug 800. The balloon punctal plug 800 comprise a collarette 702 which is configured to set on the exterior of the punctum, not illustrated, a body portion 804 extending from the collarette 802 and which projects into the lacrimal canaliculus, not illustrated, and a balloon head 806. Unlike the exemplary embodiment illustrated in Figures 4A and 4B, the balloon head 806 does not sit on a shoulder region of the body 804. The collarette 802 may comprise an aperture 808 extending into the body portion 804 to aid in grasping or securing the balloon punctal plug 800 during its insertion and/or removal from the puncta. The aperture 808 may incorporate a reservoir 810 that is configured to release a therapeutic agent or medication as described above. The balloon head 806 may be affixed to a distal portion of the body 804 relative to the collarette 802. The balloon head 806 may be affixed in a suitable manner utilizing any suitable means for attachment, including welding the balloon material to the body 804 or utilizing adhesive. An inflation lumen 812 extending from the collarette 802 to the balloon head 806 may be utilized to inflate the balloon head 806 to the configuration illustrated in Figure 8B. As in the above described exemplary embodiments, the inflation lumen 812 is positioned to maintain the low profile of the balloon punctal plug 800.

In all of the above described exemplary embodiments, the balloon may comprise various materials, thicknesses, folds and the like to create any number of anchoring configurations to secure the punctal plug in place within the lacrimal canaliculus. The balloon may be incorporated within the body or bulb/head of the punctal plug or affixed to an external portion thereof.

Although shown and described is what is believed to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is apparent that departures from specific designs and methods described and shown will suggest themselves to those skilled in the art and may be used without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The present invention is not restricted to the particular constructions described and illustrated, but should be constructed to cohere with all modifications that may fall within the scope of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A lacrimal insert comprising:
a punctal plug including a body portion having first and second ends; and
an inflatable/deflatable element cooperatively associated with the first end
of the body portion.
2. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 1, further comprising a collarette
configured to rest on the exterior of a punctum, the collarette being affixed to
the second end of the body portion.
3. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the collarette
comprises an aperture.
4. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 3, wherein the body portion
comprises a reservoir.
5. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 1, wherein the punctal plug is
fabricated from a thermoset elastomer.
6. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 5, wherein the thermoset
elastomer comprises silicone.
7. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the
inflatable/deflatable element is affixed to an exterior portion of the body portion
proximate the first end.
8. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the first end of the
body portion includes a compartment.
9. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 8, wherein the
inflatable/deflatable element is contained within the compartment
10. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the first end of the

body portion comprises a bulb.

11. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 10, wherein the inflatable/deflatable element is contained within the bulb.

12. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 7, wherein the inflatable/deflatable element comprises a balloon structure.

13. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 12, further comprising an inflation port extending from the collarette to the balloon structure.

14. The lacrimal insert according to claim 9, wherein the inflatable/deflatable element comprises a balloon structure.

15. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 14, further comprises an inflation port extending from the collarette to the balloon structure.

16. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 11, wherein the inflatable/deflatable element comprises a balloon structure.

17. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 16, further comprising an inflation port extending from the collarette to the balloon structure.

18. A method for treating an eye of a patient, the method comprising:

implanting a punctal plug, having a body portion with a first end and a second end, into a punctum of an eyelid; and

inflating an inflatable/deflatable element cooperatively associated with the first end of the body portion to anchor the punctal plug in a lacrimal canaliculus.

806 is once again affixed to the external portion of the balloon punctal plug 800. The balloon punctal plug 800 comprise a collarette 802 which is configured to set on the exterior of the punctum, not illustrated, a body portion 804 extending from the collarette 802 and which projects into the lacrimal canaliculus, not illustrated, and a balloon head 806. Unlike the exemplary embodiment illustrated in Figures 4A and 4B, the balloon head 806 does not sit on a shoulder region of the body 804. The collarette 802 may comprise an aperture 808 extending into the body portion 804 to aid in grasping or securing the balloon punctal plug 800 during its insertion and/or removal from the puncta. The aperture 808 may incorporate a reservoir 810 that is configured to release a therapeutic agent or medication as described *above*. The balloon head 806 may be affixed to a distal portion of the body 804 relative to the collarette 802. The balloon head 806 may be affixed in a suitable manner utilizing any suitable means for attachment, including welding the balloon material to the body 804 or utilizing adhesive. An inflation lumen 812 extending from the collarette 802 to the balloon head 806 may be utilized to inflate the balloon head 806 to the configuration illustrated in Figure 8B. As in the *above* described exemplary embodiments, the inflation lumen 812 is positioned to maintain the low profile of the balloon punctal plug 800.

In all of the *above* described exemplary embodiments, the balloon may comprise various materials, thicknesses, folds and the like to create any number of anchoring configurations to secure the punctal plug in place within the lacrimal canaliculus. The balloon may be incorporated within the body or bulb/head of the punctal plug or affixed to an external portion thereof.

Although shown and described is what is *believed* to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is apparent that departures from specific designs and methods described and shown will suggest themselves to those skilled in the art and may be used without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The present invention is not restricted to the particular constructions described and illustrated, but should be constructed to cohere with all modifications that may fall within the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS:

1. A lacrimal insert comprising:
a punctal plug including a body portion having a reservoir and first and second ends;
and
an inflatable/deflatable element cooperatively associated with the first end of the
body portion wherein the reservoir is separate from the inflatable/deflatable element.
2. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 1, further comprising a collarette
configured to rest on the exterior of a punctum, the collarette being affixed to the second end
of the body portion.
3. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the collarette comprises an
aperture.
4. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 1, wherein the punctal plug is
fabricated from a thermoset elastomer.
5. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 4, wherein the thermoset elastomer
comprises silicone.
6. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the inflatable/deflatable
element is affixed to an exterior portion of the body portion proximate the first end.
7. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the first end of the body
portion includes a compartment.
8. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 7, wherein the inflatable/deflatable
element is contained within the compartment.
9. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 2, wherein the first end of the body
portion comprises a bulb.
10. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 9, wherein the inflatable/deflatable
element is contained within the bulb.
11. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 6, wherein the inflatable/deflatable

element comprises a balloon structure.

12. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 11, further comprising an inflation port extending from the collarette to the balloon structure.

13. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 8, wherein the inflatable/deflatable element comprises a balloon structure.

14. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 13, further comprises an inflation port extending from the collarette to the balloon structure.

15. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 10, wherein the inflatable/deflatable element comprises a balloon structure.

16. The lacrimal insert according to Claim 15, further comprising an inflation port extending from the collarette to the balloon structure.