



BLEPHARITIS

WHAT IS BLEPHARITIS?

Blepharitis is a condition characterised by inflammation of the eyelid margins and dysfunction of the oil glands (Meibomian glands) in the eyelid. It usually affects both eyes and although it is not serious, it can cause troublesome symptoms.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

Usually a blockage of the Meibomian glands and a low grade infection of the eyelid margins. It is also more common in people with eczema or other allergic conditions.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

- Red, crusty eyelids
- Gritty, sore eyes
- Red eyes
- Irritable, burning eyes

HOW CAN BLEPHARITIS BE TREATED?

There is no magic cure, but measures can be taken to relieve your symptoms. Thorough cleaning of the lid margins twice a day is the most effective measure. This will reduce the frequency and severity of flare-ups of blepharitis.

LID CLEANING

Warm compresses

These are to loosen the fatty blockages of the Meibomian glands, prior to expressing these during lid massage.

Soak a cloth in hot water and apply to closed eyelids for several minutes. Commercial eyebags are also available for this purpose that can be heated in the microwave.

OTHER TREATMENTS

If the eyes are dry, replacing the tears with lubricants (artificial tears) may help to relieve symptoms. These can be obtained from your local pharmacy. If there are signs of infection present, your doctor may prescribe you a temporary course of antibiotic drops or cream.

Warm compresses

These are to loosen the fatty blockages of the Meibomian glands, prior to expressing these during lid massage. Soak a cloth in hot water and apply to closed eyelids for several minutes. Commercial eyebags are also available for this purpose that can be heated in the microwave.

Lid massage

Using a finger or cotton bud, firmly stroke the skin of the eyelid towards the eyelashes, where the Meibomian glands open up – this helps to unblock the glands and express the oils. Move along the length of the eyelids.



THE MEDICAL EYE CLINIC

All your eye needs...

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Lid cleansing

Boil some water and let it cool. Add a pinch of Sodium Bicarbonate to an eggcup of water, or add a few drops of baby shampoo to warm water in a small cup or bowl.

Then dip a cotton bud into the cleaning solution, pull the lower eyelid away from the eye with a finger and gently scrub along the eyelid margin removing any crusts from between the lashes.

For the top eyelid, this is often easiest with the eye closed.

OTHER TREATMENTS

If the eyes are dry, replacing the tears with lubricants (artificial tears) may help to relieve symptoms. These can be obtained from your local pharmacy. If there are signs of infection present, your doctor may prescribe you a temporary course of antibiotic drops or cream.

ON-GOING CARE

Lid cleaning may be needed long-term. It takes time to be effective but once symptoms are under control, ongoing lid cleaning will help to prevent further flare-ups of blepharitis.