



Blepharitis

Your questions answered

Ophthalmology Department

Care of common eye conditions

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What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a common inflammatory condition of the eyelids. Oils and other products normally secreted by the eyelid build up on the eyes and eye lids surface and eyelashes.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Irritation
- Burning
- Itching of the eyelids
- Redness of the eyes and eyelids
- Recurring eye infections

What causes blepharitis?

There are two main types:

1. Infective
2. Seborrhoeic

The seborrhoeic type is usually associated with dandruff of the scalp, eyebrows and ears.

What treatment will I need?

The recommended therapy is always, careful cleaning of the eyelids and lashes to remove the irritating substances. Antibiotic ointment or tablets may also be prescribed. To obtain the best results please follow the instructions listed below, daily or as advised by the medical staff.

Warm compresses

To prepare a compress, soak a clean cloth or flannel in water as warm as the lids can stand and then apply it to the closed lids for 5-10 minute period. You will need to rewarm your cloth repeatedly. This will not only feel good, but will make the oily build-up and debris easier to remove.

Lid cleaning

You will need:

- Cotton wool buds
- Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda)

Make up a solution as follows:

1. Dilute half a teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate **with** 150 ml (approx a cup full) of cooled boiled water
2. Wash your hands
3. Dip the head of the cotton wool bud in the diluted solution
4. Close your eyes and gently clean the eyelids and lashes working from the nose side outwards
Do not touch the eyeball or inner eyelid. Please be careful.
5. Discard each cotton wool bud after one wipe to prevent contamination of the solution.
6. If an antibiotic ointment has been prescribed use after the lid hygiene. Place a small amount of ointment on your fingertips and rub it into the lid margin and lashes.
7. Wash your hands when you have finished.

How long will it be before I notice any improvement?

Having followed the steps outlined above you would expect the redness and irritation to improve within 2-8 weeks of starting treatment.

What happens if I do not clean my lids?

The inflammation of the eyelids will not improve and may worsen. You may develop recurrent lid and eye infections.

Remember

Blepharitis is a skin condition which may be with you for life. The treatment is aimed at minimising your symptoms and making you more comfortable. Lid hygiene should be part of your daily routine. To stop treatment altogether will probably result in a recurrence of problems. The scalp and eye brows must be kept clean by means of shampoo and water. You should also avoid using eye make-up.

We are here to help you, so don't hesitate to call us if you need further advice.



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

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