



Blepharitis

Blepharitis is a common, chronic (long-term) condition that involves inflammation of the eyelids. The eyelids normally secrete oil which helps to protect the surface of the eye and reduce the evaporation of tears.

A low grade infection of the eyelid margins or abnormal secretion of the oils results in blepharitis. Symptoms may vary and include irritation, redness, soreness, crusting, burning, dryness, itching and swelling of the eyelids.

Although the condition cannot be cured, the symptoms can be controlled by performing regular eyelid hygiene as described below.

Treatment is aimed at minimising your symptoms and protecting the surface of the eye. Regular eyelid treatment should become part of your daily routine.

1. Hot Eyelid Compresses

Use a commercially available heat mask or soak a clean cloth in boiled water (as warm as the lids can stand) and then apply it to the closed lids for a 5 – 10 minute period. This will soften the oil and make it easier to remove.

2. Eyelid Massage

Use a moistened cotton wool bud or the tip of your finger to massage the eyelids. Stroke the upper eyelid downwards (towards the lashes) and bottom eyelid upwards (towards the lashes). This will express the heated oils to coat the surface of the eye. Avoid using baby shampoo as this may make interfere with the tear film and exacerbate the symptoms.

3. Eyelid Cleaning

A moistened cotton bud may be used to gently scrub between the eyelashes. Avoid aggressive scrubbing as this may cause further irritation. Alternatively, commercially available lid wipes may be used to rub along the eyelid margin following the hot compresses and massage.

4. Lubricants

Use plenty of lubricants during the day and as directed by your doctor. This will substitute the oils and tears and thus soothe the eyes.

5. Omega 3 dietary supplements

There is evidence that omega 3 fatty acids (contained in oily fish and flaxseed oil)

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can help reduce the inflammation associated with blepharitis and improve dry eyes.

Steps 1 – 4 form the mainstay of treatment and will help reduce the symptoms and frequency of flare ups.

If you have been prescribed antibiotic or steroid ointment by the doctor **it should be applied following the warm compresses and lid massage.**

Place a small amount of the ointment on your fingertips and rub it into the lid margin and lashes.

Long-term antibiotic tablets may also be prescribed in severe cases and should be used as directed by your doctor.

Do not stop the treatment altogether, as this may result in re-occurrence.

Contact Details:

Please ask our staff any questions you may have about your treatment. Alternatively, you can phone the main hospital switchboard on 0121 424 2000 and ask to speak to your consultant's secretary.

Clinic Contact Numbers:

	Appointments:	Nurses answer phone:
Heartlands	0121 424 0545	0121 424 1536
Solihull	0121 424 4463	0121 424 4456
Good Hope	0121 424 9651	0121 424 9667

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