

Blepharitis

Antibiotics

In acute stages, topical antibiotic ointment such as fucithalamic or tetracycline ointment may be prescribed. This is done by squeezing a small amount of the ointment onto the tip of the little finger and rubbing it onto the eyelid margin. Any excess ointment may then be wiped off. Some patients may need low dose oral antibiotics like doxycycline to provide relief from signs and symptoms.

Steroid eye drops

If there are cornea sterile infiltrates, mild topical steroids may be used on a short-term basis.

Lubricating eye drops

Artificial tears are useful in treating dry eyes that is often associated with blepharitis.

Other medications

Omega-3 supplements in the form of fish oil or flaxseed may be useful in reducing symptoms of blepharitis.

LOCATION MAP



This patient information leaflet is a general guide to help patients understand specific eye conditions, treatment or tests. The information does not replace the need for individual advice from an ophthalmologist. Please consult with your ophthalmologist about your specific eye condition and/or concerns.

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Information correct at date of print (March 2020)

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BLEPHARITIS

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Blepharitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids. It usually affects the edges (margins) of the eyelids. It is not a serious condition but may become an uncomfortable and irritating problem.

What causes blepharitis?

Blepharitis occurs because of a dysfunction of the oil glands (meibomian glands) that are present along the eyelid margins.

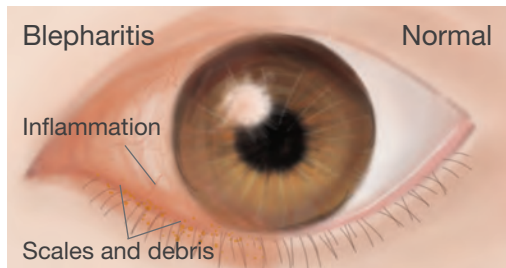


Illustration: Blepharitis

The meibomian glands are responsible for producing an oily substance that makes up part of your tears. A problem in these glands can lead to excess production of this oily substance or a blockage in the glands, which can cause the eyelids to become irritated and inflamed.

Blepharitis is often caused by a bacterial infection. Everyone has bacteria on the surface of their skin, but in some people, bacteria thrive in the skin at the base of the eyelashes. Large amounts of bacteria around the eyelashes can cause dandruff-like scales and debris to form along the lashes and eyelid margins.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of blepharitis may include one or more of the following:

- Recurrent or chronic red eyes
- Aggravating dry eyes
- Chronic eye irritation with itchy or gritty sensation
- Flaking of the skin around the eyelids
- Crusting of the eyelids

What can I do to prevent blepharitis?

You can reduce your risk of contracting blepharitis by maintaining good eye health and eyelid hygiene. Although it is a common condition, you should see an ophthalmologist as eyelid infections may result in complications such as styes, small cysts, chalazion on the eyelid or corneal infections, etc.

What is the treatment for blepharitis?

Blepharitis is often a chronic or ongoing condition but it can be controlled with the following treatments. Your ophthalmologist will recommend an appropriate treatment for you.

Warm compresses

Wet a clean washcloth with warm water, wring it dry, and place it over your closed eyelids for five minutes. Repeat two or three times a day. This will loosen scales and debris around your eyelashes. It also helps to unclog the oil glands.

Eyelid scrubs

Use a damp facial cotton square with a drop of mild shampoo to cleanse your eyelids and gently scrub the base of your eyelashes and lid margins of each eyelid. If you are using an eyelid cleanser recommended by your ophthalmologist, follow the instructions provided. In severe cases of blepharitis, it may be necessary to scrub the eyelid two times daily. Eyelid hygiene has to be maintained on a long-term basis.