

EYELID
& FACIAL
TWITCHING

UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT
**EYELID & FACIAL
TWITCHING**



Tomorrow's Eye Care, Today[®]



Singapore National
Eye Centre

SingHealth

Eyelid & Facial Twitching

Eyelid twitch happens when there is involuntary movement and spasm in the eyelids.

What are the different types of eyelid twitching, and how can they be treated?

There are three main types of eyelid twitching and they vary in severity.

Eyelid Myokymia

Most common type of twitching – happens to most people at some point in time:

- Affects only the eyelid
- Can involve either the upper or lower lid, but usually only one eye at a time
- Usually goes away spontaneously after days or weeks
- Is *not* a sign of a serious health problem

The **cause** is unknown, but may be triggered by:

- Alcohol intake
- Excess caffeine
- Fatigue
- Stress

- Dry eyes or oily eyelids leading to irritation of the eye surface
- Wind or air pollution

Treatment

- Lifestyle changes: improve sleep patterns, decrease caffeine or alcohol intake
- Use of lubricating eye drops
- Eyelid hygiene

Benign Essential Blepharospasm (BEB)

This is a movement disorder of the eyelids that causes uncontrolled blinking, squeezing and eyelid closure in both eyes. It occurs in middle age and affects women more than men.

The exact cause is unknown but may be due to abnormal functioning of the basal ganglia, a part of the brain that help coordinate our movements.

Symptoms

- Starts with increased blinking of both eyes
- May progress to frequent spasms of the eyelids
- Eyelids may be squeezed shut, lasting from seconds to minutes. This can interfere with

the patient keeping his/her eyes open to do ordinary tasks such as walking and reading

- May be worsened by certain factors e.g., dry eyes, oily eyelids, bright light, stress, social interaction, etc.

BEB can be **distinguished from eyelid myokymia** by the following features:

- Both eyes are involved
- Frequent blinking
- Uncontrollable eye closure
- May have spasm of the lower face and neck muscles, with abnormal movements of the mouth seen

Treatment

- Botox (botulinum toxin) injection
(See section under HFS)

Hemifacial Spasm (HFS)

This is a condition whereby the patient experiences involuntary spasm of the muscles of half the face. Middle-aged men and women are affected equally.

The cause may be related to irritation of the facial nerve by a normal blood vessel lying close to it in the brain.

Symptoms

- During a spasm, the eye on the side of the HFS closes and the corner of the mouth tightens and pulls upwards

Hemifacial spasm can be **distinguished from BEB and eyelid myokymia** by the following features:

- Only affects one eye
- Half the face is affected

Tests

- MRI scan may be able to identify the contact or compression of the facial nerve by the offending blood vessel in the brain

Treatment

- **Botulinum toxin (Botox) injection**
 - Considered to be the most effective treatment
 - Does not treat the root of the problem
 - Injections relax muscles that control eyelid movement, helping to relieve any spasms
 - Takes effect about 4-5 days after injection
 - Effect usually lasts 3-6 months, and injections can be repeated

Eyelid & Facial Twitching

- Anaesthetic cream is applied to your skin prior to the injections in order to minimise discomfort
- If this is your first injection, your doctor may review you in two weeks to assess if the injected dose is suitable for your needs. It may take a few sessions to achieve the optimal dose for you

Side effects of Botox

- Mild bruising at injection sites
- Dry eyes (common)
- Incomplete closure of the eye
- Droopy upper eyelid (uncommon)
- Double vision (uncommon)
- Side effects in other parts of the body e.g., swallowing, speaking or breathing (very rare)

Side effects of Botox treatment around the eyes relate to Botox leaking into surrounding muscles not intended to be weakened. These usually disappear by 3-6 months.

• Surgery

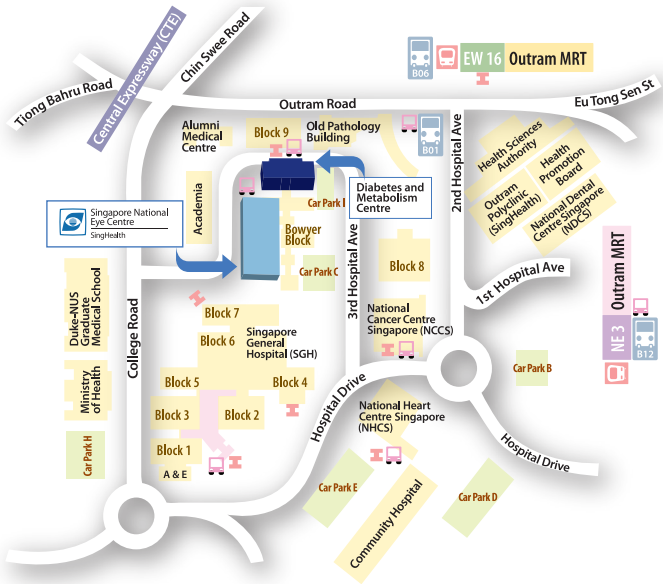
- Treats root of the problem by removing the contact between the facial nerve and the offending blood vessel

- This procedure is known as microvascular decompression and involves implanting a small sponge between the facial nerve and the irritation-causing blood vessel
- It is performed by the neurosurgeons under general anaesthesia



Illustration of patient with hemifacial spasm (HFS)

LOCATION MAP



Legend

MRT Station

Taxi Stand

East West Line

North East Line

Shuttle Bus Service
Mon to Fri (8.00am - 7.00pm)
Sat (8.00am - 2.00pm)

Opp Outram Park Stn
Bus No. 33, 63, 75, 121,
122, 174, 174e, 851, 970

Outram Park Stn Exit F
Bus No. 61, 124, 143, 147,
147e, 166, 197, 961, 961C

Outram Park Stn/Outram Rd
Bus No. 33, 63, 75, 121, 122, 174,
174e, 534, 535, 549, 761, 851, 970

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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Singapore National Eye Centre Company Registration No. 198900840W

Singapore National Eye Centre

11 Third Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168751

Appointments: (65) 6227 7266 Fax: (65) 6226 1884

Email: appointments@sneec.com.sg

Website: www.sneec.com.sg



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