

Eyelid hygiene and blepharitis



What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is an inflammation of your eyelids. The membrane covering the inside of your eyelid and the white of your eye may also become inflamed.

If blepharitis isn't treated promptly, it may lead to a cyst (an inflammation of an oil gland on your eyelid) or a stye (an infection at the base of an eyelash).

What causes blepharitis?

It can be caused by bacteria (germs) on your eyelids or on the skin around your eyes. Dandruff or oily skin may also cause blepharitis. Wearing contact lenses or make up can make the symptoms worse. Blepharitis can't always be cured but it can be controlled.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Redness of your eyelids
- Swelling and tenderness of your eyelids
- Itching around your eye lashes
- Greasy flakes or scales around your eyelashes
- Hard crusts at the base of your eyelashes
- Crusts can form while you're asleep. If this happens, it may be difficult to open your eyes when you wake up

How is it treated?

Bathing

1. Each morning, boil a pint of water and let it cool.
2. Add either a teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate or enough baby shampoo to give a lather.
3. Using either a cotton bud or a piece of gauze, clean the skin at the root of your lashes. Do the upper and lower lids of both eyes morning and evening.
4. Clean again with plain water.
5. Throw away the water at the end of the day.
6. Apply any ointment or eye drops you have been prescribed.

Warm compress

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
2. Wet a **clean** flannel or washcloth with warm water and wring it out.
3. Close your eyes and place the warm cloth over your eyelids for three to five minutes. This will help to loosen any flakes or crusts.
4. Wet the cloth again, as needed, to keep it warm.
5. Repeat two or more times daily. Use a clean cloth each time.

Your doctor may prescribe eye drops or ointment to help relieve the redness, swelling and irritation.

What can I do to help the condition?

- Wash your hands well with soap and warm water before touching your eyes
- Keep dandruff under control
- Don't wear eye makeup while your eyes are inflamed. Change your eye makeup regularly

How long will the treatment take to work?

A few days. Don't give up even if it doesn't seem to be working.

What should I do if the blepharitis comes back?

Start bathing your eyelids and using the warm compresses again, and contact your GP.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

