Printed for: Eyesight and Surgery Associates

American Academy of Ophthalmology
The Eye M.D. Association
2014–2015

Blepharitis

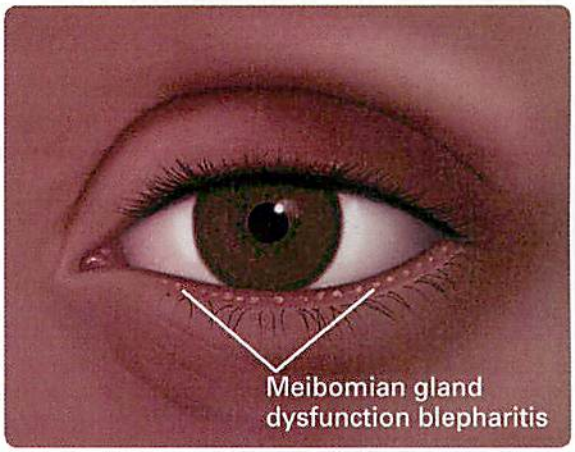
What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is when you have bacteria and oily flakes at the base of your eyelashes. Your eyelids are red, swollen, or feel like they are burning. Blepharitis is very common, especially among people who have oily skin, dandruff or dry eyes.

With blepharitis, the eyelids become coated with oily particles and bacteria near the base of the eyelashes.

What causes blepharitis?

Everyone has some bacteria on their skin. Some people, however, have more bacteria at the base of their eyelashes than other people. This can cause dandruff-like flakes to form. Also, some people have problems with oil glands in their eyelids, leading to blepharitis.



Keeping blepharitis under control

It is very important to keep your eyelids, skin and hair clean. This will help keep your blepharitis symptoms under control. Use gentle baby shampoo to wash your eyelids/eyelashes every day.

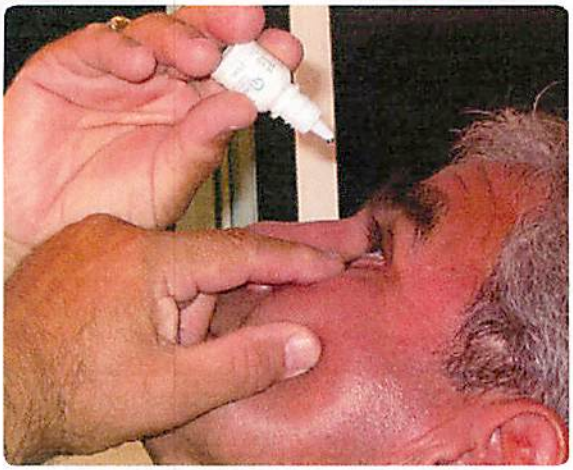
How is blepharitis treated?

Blepharitis is a chronic, or ongoing, condition. There are ways to treat its symptoms. Treatments include:

Warm compresses. Wet a clean washcloth with warm water and wring it out until somewhat dry. Place the washcloth over your closed eyes for at least 1 minute. Wet the washcloth as often as needed so it stays warm. This will help loosen the flakes sticking around your eyelashes. It also helps keep nearby oil glands from clogging.

Eyelid scrubs. Soak a clean washcloth, cotton swab (Q-tip), or lint-free pad in warm water. Then use it to gently scrub the base of your eyelashes. Scrub for about 15 seconds.

Antibiotic ointment. Your ophthalmologist may have you use an antibiotic ointment on your eyes. Put a small amount of ointment on a clean fingertip or a cotton swab (Q-tip). Gently apply the ointment to the base of your eyelashes. Do this just before bedtime, or as your doctor recommends.



Artificial tears or steroid eyedrops may be prescribed temporarily to relieve dry eye or inflammation.

Eye drops. Artificial tears or steroid eye drops may reduce redness, swelling and dry eye. Your ophthalmologist might prescribe an antibiotic eye drop to help the oil glands work better.

Skin and eyelid hygiene. It is very important to keep your eyelids, skin and hair clean. This keeps your blepharitis symptoms under control. Carefully wash your eyelashes every day with baby shampoo. Also, wash your hair, scalp and eyebrows with an antibacterial shampoo.

Summary

Blepharitis is a coating of bacteria and oily flakes at the base of your eyelashes. It causes swollen, red and sore eyelids. Warm compresses help loosen the flakes and help keep nearby oil glands from clogging. Sometimes antibiotic ointment or eyedrops may be used.

Blepharitis is an ongoing (chronic) condition. You can keep its symptoms under control by keeping your skin, hair and eyelids clean every day.

For more information about blepharitis, scan this code with your smartphone or visit **http://sn.im/_blepharitis.**

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Content last reviewed 09/14