

Blepharitis

What is "Blepharitis"?

Blepharitis is a chronic (long term) inflammation of the eyelids. It is quite common and non-sight threatening but it does cause irritation and discomfort. Blepharitis can cause you eyelids to become red and lashes crusty.

Common symptoms of blepharitis burning, soreness and stinging of the eyes and the eyelids. Blepharitis can be managed at home however if left unmanaged then it can lead to styes and ulcers.

Although blepharitis is more common as you get older anyone at any age may develop it.

What does blepharitis look like?

Anterior Blepharitis

Crusting or scales, which can look like dandruff, at the base of your eye lashes caused by a build-up of bacteria.

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Posterior Blepharitis

Also known as meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD), the meibomian glands which secrete or pump out the oily layer of your tears become blocked. This can be more difficult to see with the naked eye but can be detected by your optometrist.

How is blepharitis managed?

It is important to remember when tackling blepharitis that it is a chronic (long term) condition and so it can take a while to calm the eye lids down and although manageable there is no cure as such.

There are several steps to resolving blepharitis and depending on what signs you have your management may vary.

Warm Compresses and Lid Massage

Applying a warm compress to the eye lids for 10 minutes softens the lipids that block the glands. Halcyon Vision recommends using a warm

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compress that will keep its heat for this time something like a hot water bottle or a reusable warming pack.

An analogy we like to use is melting butter in a frying pan. On the heat the butter does not immediately melt. The flames warm the pan which melts the butter. Please do not apply melted butter to your eye lids. The heat from the warm compress must heat through your skin, the eye lid muscle and then the glands at the back of your eyelid. Like the melting butter in the frying pan the heat needs time to melt the waxy oils in the meibomian glands.

Please do not apply melted butter to your eyelids.

After 10 minutes of consistent heat gently massage your eye lids towards your lashes to help secrete the now melted lipids from the glands.

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This step will let you gradually clear your meibomian glands. It may take several weeks of completing this step 1-2xdaily to clear enough glands to significantly improve your symptoms. Even when symptoms have improved unless completed regularly, perhaps once a week, the glands may become blocked again.

Lid Hygiene

The aim of this step is to clear the debris and bacteria from your lashes. In blepharitis this debris is typically right down at the base of your lashes and so it needs a careful scrub to achieve the best results. There are several products you can use which you can get from your local optometrist/pharmacy/chemist and from our website.

Johnson's baby shampoo mixed with lukewarm water (1:4) is often recommended and works well. The downside with this mixture is the setup is more difficult. The specific eye lid

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hygiene products on the market are convenient, easy to use and are effective.

With good adherence to lid hygiene, blepharitis can be very well controlled but due to its chronic nature if the regimen is stopped the condition can return. We recommend continuing with a lid hygiene routine at least 1x per week.

Lubricants

Blepharitis can often make your eyes uncomfortable. Any lubricant eye drop can help with this and typically these can be used between 2-4xdaily (always read the bottle). You can purchase lubricant drops or artificial tears from your local optometrist/pharmacy/chemist and from our website.

Severe Cases

If your blepharitis is causing severe irritation and is not responsive to the conservative measures discussed previously your optometrist



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can discuss other options and may involve your GP in further management.