

Blepharitis

Information for patients

Ophthalmology Services

What is Blepharitis?

Blepharitis refers to inflammation of the eyelids. Oils and other products normally secreted by the eye and eyelids build up on the lid surface and eyelashes resulting in eye irritation and often redness. It's a common disorder and occurs in two forms:

Anterior Blepharitis: this is when the inflammation affects the outside front edge of your eyelids, where your eyelashes are connected. Two possible causes are bacterial infection and Seborrheic dermatitis.

Posterior Blepharitis: this is when the inflammation affects the inside front edge of your eyelids, where they come into contact with your eye. This is caused when something affects the glands that are found at the rim of your eyelids, for example skin conditions such as seborrheic dermatitis or acne rosacea.

Signs & Symptoms:

Regardless of which type of blepharitis you have, you will probably experience such symptoms as eye irritation, burning, tearing, foreign body sensations, crusty debris (in the lashes, in the corner of the eyes or line up with the rest of the sentence on the lids), dryness and red eyelid margins.

How can eyelid hygiene help?

Developing a regular routine of eye hygiene is essential in the treatment of blepharitis as it tends to recur and rarely disappears completely. It is important that you clean your eyelids every day, whether or not you are experiencing any symptoms. You should consider it part of your daily routine, like showering or brushing your teeth. Daily eyelid care helps prevent the build-up of oils and crusted matter around the eyelid and lash area.

Treatment:

Treatment depends on the type of blepharitis you have. It may include applying warm compresses to the eyelids, cleansing them, using an antibiotic and massaging the lids. If your blepharitis makes your eyes feel dry (usually because your tears evaporate more quickly) you may be recommended to use artificial tears.

The warm compresses are designed to both loosen crusts on your eyes before you cleanse them and make the tear secretions more liquid and less greasy. Wash your hands then

dampen a clean washcloth with warm water and place it over your closed eyes for 3 to 5 minutes. Cleansing the eyelids is essential to blepharitis treatment. You may be recommended to clean them with a special over-the-counter product specifically made for cleansing the eyelids.

When you first begin treatment, you may have to cleanse your lids several times a day. When the eyes feel better from the lid hygiene (usually after about 3 weeks) treatment can be done once a day.

Treatment continued:

Remember, not to stop treatment altogether as it may result in a recurrence of problems. Only regular lid hygiene will keep the blepharitis under control.

Further Information and advice can be obtained from:

Maidstone Hospital Eye Clinic

09:00am – 17:00pm, Monday to Friday

Telephone: 01622 226202

Tunbridge Wells Hospital (Pembury) Eye Clinic

Answerphone 01892 633877

09:00am – 17:00pm, Monday to Thursday


Telephone: 01892 633880

09:00am – 13:00pm, Friday

Telephone: 01892 634450

For out of hours ring: 01622 729000, ask for the on-call eye doctor or go to your nearest Emergency Department
NHS 111 - Telephone 111

NHS 111
NHS Choices online

 **111**
www.nhs.uk

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Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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