

Blepharitis

Blepharitis is a common condition of the eyelid margins. Blepharitis typically presents with as irritating, bacteria-colonized, dandruff-like crusting at the base of the eyelashes. The condition frequently occurs in people who have either dry or oily skin. Patients with skin conditions such as rosacea, eczema or psoriasis also have a tendency to develop blepharitis. Blepharitis can either begin in childhood and continue throughout life as a chronic condition or develop later in life.

There are varying degrees of blepharitis. Mild to moderate cases may present with minor scaling, redness and crusting. Symptoms include itching, irritation and tearing. Severe cases of blepharitis may present as a significant infection and/or inflammation of the eyelashes and eyelids. If untreated, blepharitis can cause serious eye problems such as conjunctivitis, keratitis, corneal ulcers and permanent eyelid abnormalities. Blepharitis is a condition that may not be cured, however, it can be controlled with a few simple daily measures:

Wet a facecloth with warm water, wring it out then place it over closed eyelids several minutes. You may need to repeat this several times depending on the severity of your condition. After applying the hot compress, it is easier to clean the area of the crusting that typically forms at the base of the eyelashes. There are two lid cleansing methods available:

Method #1: Ocusoft® or SteriLid® Eyelid Cleanser are over-the-counter foams, available at most pharmacies. This method of lid hygiene is easy to perform and has great results. Just pump a small amount of foam onto clean fingertips or cotton swab (Q-Tip). Use a fresh cotton swab for each eye. For one minute gently but firmly massage into upper and lower eyelid margins, concentrating at the base of the eyelashes. Rinse with water and dry thoroughly.

Method #2: Take 2-3 drops of baby shampoo and mix it in a cup of warm water. Dip a cotton-tipped applicator (Q-Tip) in the solution and vigorously scrub the base of the lashes, top and bottom of each eye. Make certain to scrub from the innermost lashes to the outermost lashes. Use several cotton-tipped applicators on each eye. When finished, all crusting, scaling and discharge should be completely gone. Rinse with water and dry thoroughly.

The doctor may also prescribe an ointment to be applied to eyelids following the cleansing.

