

BLEPHARITIS

Blepharitis is inflammation of the eyelids. This condition may result in an unstable or oily tear film. Typical symptoms may include: excessive matter on the eyelids upon awakening; a gritty feeling in the eyes; a burning sensation that is worse while reading, driving, watching T.V., or periods of concentration; blurry vision that “comes and goes;” itchy eyelids; red and irritated eyelids.

Blepharitis is a very common chronic problem that may wax and wane throughout your life. The treatments indicated below are suggested for the degree of disease activity present in your eyelids at this time. After your blepharitis is under control, the treatment regimen may be slowly decreased over months. You will discover how frequently you need to treat your eyelids to remain comfortable. During periods of worsening, you may need to increase your treatments. Like brushing your teeth, regular lid hygiene practices are essential.

There are two major types of blepharitis: Anterior Lid Margin Disease and Posterior Lid Margin Disease. Anterior Lid Margin Disease is crusting on the eyelashes due to a superficial infection by any of a number of micro-organisms. Topical antibiotics for 1-2 weeks may help to decrease the infection, but the organisms rapidly develop resistance. Posterior Lid Margin disease is a problem with the glands within the eyelids producing an oily and unstable tear film to cover the front of the eye.

_____ **You have Anterior Lid Margin Disease**

_____ **You have Posterior Lid Margin Disease**

TREATMENTS:

_____ **Use Artificial Tear Drops**

_____ **Perform Warm Compresses _____ times each day**

_____ **Perform Lid Margin Scrubs _____ times each day**

_____ **Perform Lid Massages _____ times each day**

Warm or Hot Compresses

These should be applied for 10 - 20 minutes, 8 - 10 times daily. The purpose of hot compresses is to open up the pores at the ends of the ducts that drain the glands in the eyelids. Warm compresses are hot soaks over your eyes with your eyelids closed. The best way to perform at least one of your warm compresses each day is to do so while in the shower. Turn the water temperature up just a little bit, place a face cloth over your eyes, turn your face up toward the water stream, and let your eyes soak for five minutes (perhaps while your hair conditioner is working). The remainder of your hot compresses may be performed using rice in a sock. *Rice in a Sock:* Fill a clean, all-cotton sock with raw rice. Microwave to desired temperature. Caution: socks that are not 100% cotton may melt or burn at relatively low temperatures. After heating, place the sock in a plastic bag wrapped in a hot, wet facecloth.

Some people like to bring a wet face cloth to work in a plastic bag. This may be heated in a microwave.

Be very careful not to burn yourself with warm compresses. The compresses should be warm to hot, NOT scalding.

Lid Margin Scrubs

The purpose of lid margin scrubs is to clean the eyelashes and to mechanically remove many of the micro-organisms that are growing on the edge of the eyelid. Eyelid scrub pads (many brands) are available in most grocery stores and pharmacies. These work fine. With your eyelids closed, rub the eyelashes and lid margins back and forth horizontally.

If you wish to save money, Johnson's No Tears Baby Shampoo can be used. Dilute the shampoo with warm water. There are many ways to do this. One option: put a drop or two of shampoo in the bottle cap, fill the rest of the cap with water, and then stir with your finger. Put some diluted shampoo on your finger, on a face cloth, or on a Q-tip and rub your eyelashes and lid margins back and forth with your eyes closed. Then rinse away the shampoo with cold water. We suggest Johnson's Baby Shampoo in case some of the soap gets into the eye it will be less irritating, but any shampoo may be used. This may be performed while in the shower.

Lid Massages

The purpose of lid massages is to milk the thick and irritating oils out of the eyelid and into the tear film. Lid massages should be performed directly following hot compresses. After lid massages, you may wish to rinse your eyes with an Eye Rinse (many brands are available – Eye stream and Dacriose are two brands) to wash away the oil film.

Lid massages are done with the eyelids closed and massaging the eyelids vertically toward the eyelashes. The upper eyelids are massaged downward, and the lower eyelids are massaged upward. It is easier to massage the upper eyelids, and in general, since there are more glands in the upper eyelids, this is the more important eyelid to massage, but both should be done.