

Blepharitis Information: A guide to active treatment

Blepharitis, now called meibomium gland dysfunction, is a common inflammatory condition that affects the eye lids and causes eye irritation and sometimes even pain, classically worse in the mornings. This guide explains how to manage it



There are many different types of blepharitis, ranging from those that affect the outer edge of the eyelid to those that affect the glands within the

eyelid themselves. In most cases both involve growth of bacteria on the eyelid often due to underlying skin conditions. The most common skin condition is Acne Rosacea which mainly affects adults

The symptoms of blepharitis are usually irritation, a gritty or sandy sensation often worse in the mornings and inability to open the eyes upon awakening which is common.

Managing Blepharitis

There are four steps to managing blepharitis.



Step 1. Heat the eyelids

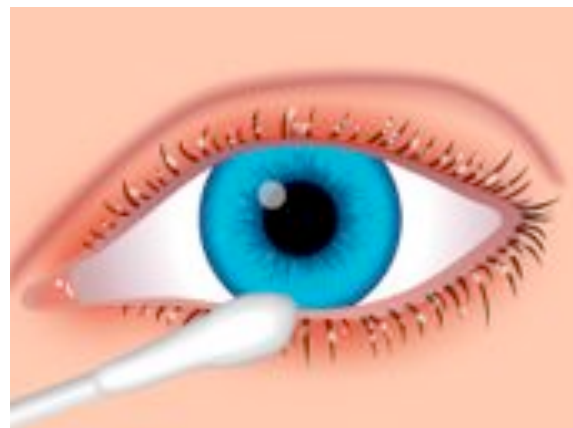
Using water as hot as you can reasonably stand, wet a face washer and place it against your closed eye for two minutes. The face washer will need to

be re-heated several times as it cools rapidly. The heat will melt the oil in your eyelids.

Step 2. Massage the eyelids

The glands in the eyelids drain on the edge of the eyelid. Putting pressure on your eyelid against the eyeball will force oil out of the glands. You should start in the corner, push firmly for one second then move your finger to a new position gradually working your way outwards. You need to do both upper and lower lids.

Step 3. Clean the lid margin to remove scales and discharge



Either prepare a cleaning solution by boiling 1 litre of water and adding half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda or purchase a commercial solution such as LidCare or SteriLid.

Dip a cotton bud in the bicarb solution and rub along the lid margins and on the lashes which may have debris caked on. The lower lid is easier to do and requires you to pull the eyelid away from your eye. Repeat on the upper lid. If you use LidCare sachets or SteriLid, the procedure is slightly different but it will be explained on the accompanying instructions.

Initially you will find that cleaning the lids may irritate them for several days



Step 4 Apply antibiotic

You will be given a prescription for Chlorsig ointment which you rub into the edge of your eyelid with your finger. It doesn't matter if it gets in your eye. This is used to kill the bacteria that is feeding on the debris on your eyelid. Antibiotic is not required for all forms of blepharitis so you will be told if this step is required for you. You should perform this regime once per day until the symptoms improve

Additional treatment

In addition to this daily regime you should use an ocular lubricant at least three to four times per day. There are many good lubricants available such as Systane, Optive or many others. Do not use a drop intended to remove the redness.

You may also be given a prescription for Fluomethalone (FML) drops. This is safe to use although it is a steroid, it does not penetrate the eye and so can be used long term.

Oral antibiotic

If you have acne rosacea you may be commenced on Doxycycline tablets for 3 - 6 months. This is to treat the underlying skin component of the blepharitis

What to expect

In the majority of cases, there will be significant improvement. Blepharitis however is a chronic condition and if you stop attending to it, it will recur.

A good approach is to perform the above regime as often as is required to keep it under control. That might mean daily, weekly or monthly. Long term use of lubricants is highly recommended and long term use of FML may also be required.

There is new technology called LipiFlow which is currently being trialled which may prove to be useful

If you have any questions about Blepharitis please call us on 9650 0210 for more information