

BLEPHARTIS AND EYELID HYGIENE

Q What is blepharitis?

A Blepharitis is an inflammatory condition of the eyelids. Oils and other products normally secreted by the eye, build up on the eyelid margins and eyelashes, resulting in symptoms of eye irritation, itchiness and redness. It may be associated with some skin conditions, e.g. eczema and dermatitis. If untreated, blepharitis can cause other eye conditions, such as cysts, styes or conjunctivitis.



Q How do I maintain eyelid hygiene?

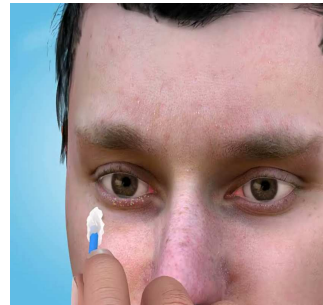
A Blepharitis can usually be controlled by careful cleaning of the eyelids and lashes as described below.

The aim is to soothe the eyelids, 'unplug' any blocked meibomian glands and clear out any stagnant oily secretions from these glands, and to clean the eyelids of debris. This is a daily routine that consists of three parts - warmth, massage and cleaning. If you wear contact lenses, remove them before you start.

- First boil a kettle of water and let the water cool down until it is warm / hot to the touch. Pour the water into a clean bowl and add some baby shampoo – approximately 1 part shampoo to 10 parts water.
- While this is cooling, gently press on the eyelids with a flannel (facecloth) soaked in very warm water for 5-10 minutes. If the flannel cools, keep re-warming it in the warm water. This will help to soften any crusts and allow the secretions of the

meibomian glands to flow more freely.

- Massage the eyelids immediately after applying the warmth. Massaging helps to push out the oily fluid from the tiny meibomian glands.
- Take a new cotton bud and dip it into the solution of baby shampoo. Gently rub the cotton bud across the upper and lower eyelid margins removing the debris and scales. Use a new cotton bud for the other eye. **Do not** dip the used cotton bud back into the solution.



Various commercial products are available to help with this process. Ask your optometrist for more information.

Q What if this does not work?

A You may need to carry out this routine for a few weeks in order for the condition to resolve. If the condition does not resolve, you should consult your optometrist or GP who may be able to prescribe an appropriate treatment.