



Blepharitis Advice

What is it?

Blepharitis is an inflammation of the edges of the eyelids and usually affects both eyes. It is not usually serious, but may become an uncomfortable, irritating problem. Blepharitis is typically a chronic (long-term) problem where symptoms often 'come and go'. Regular lid hygiene helps to keep this condition under control.

What symptoms can there be?

- Sore and itchy eyelids, which may look red and inflamed or greasy.
- Burning, soreness or stinging in the eyes;
- The eyes may become 'sticky' with discharge. In particular, the eyelids may stick together in the morning and be itchy.
- Sometimes tiny flakes or scales appear on the eyelids which look like small flakes of dandruff. Crusts may develop at the base of eyelashes.
- One or more of the tiny glands of the eyelids (meibomian glands) may block and fill with an oily fluid.

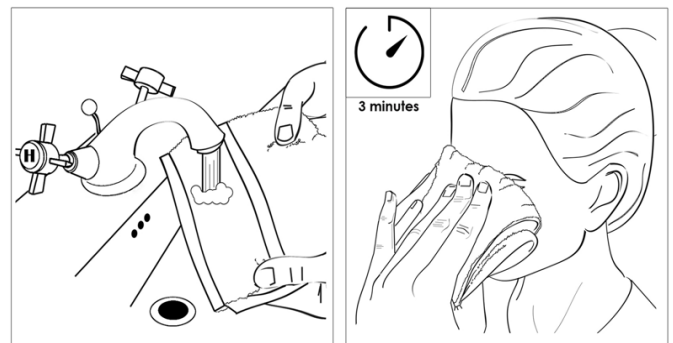
What treatment will I need?

- Good eyelid hygiene is the basis of treatment and should be carried out on each lid twice a day unless otherwise instructed by the clinician. Avoid eye make-up, especially eyeliner. If this is not possible, use eyeliner that washes off easily.
- Avoid contact lens wear especially during acute episode
- Dry eyes can be treated with artificial tear drops

Eyelid Hygiene

The eyelids should be cleaned in the following way:

1. To help melt the oils that may have built-up in the glands behind your eyelids, hold a hot flannel or microwavable eye bag firmly onto closed eyelids for 3 minutes. Take care not to burn your skin.



2. Unblock oil glands with massage:
This should always be done immediately after step 1. The aim is to apply pressure to the eyelids to clear the softened oil out of the glands, ready to be cleaned away. Use your index finger to apply pressure to the eyelid whilst slowly rolling it towards the eyelashes. This process may slightly irritate your eyes at first, a bit like getting soap in your eyes. However, this is normal and should get better with time.



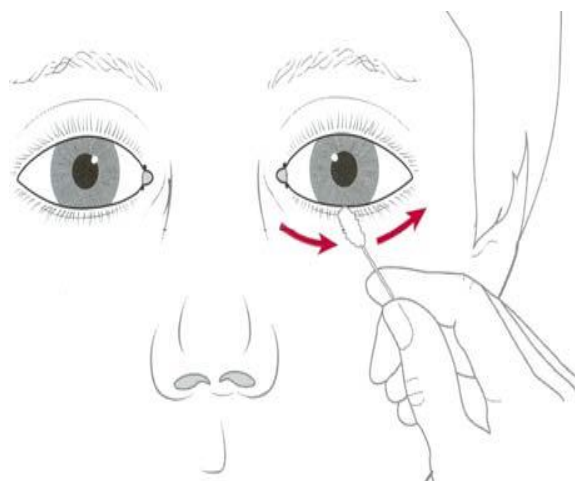
Lid margin hygiene

Various eyelid-cleaning solutions and eyelid wipes are available commercially, or you can try making one at home.

For a home-made solution, fill a bowl with one pint of boiled water and allow it to cool to a warm temperature. Add a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda.

To clean the eyelid:

- soak some clean cotton wool in the cleaning solution and remove crustiness from around the eyelids, paying special attention to the eyelashes; repeat this process if necessary, using a clean piece of cotton wool
- Dip a clean cotton bud into the solution and gently rub along the edges of the eyelids (where the lashes are growing from) by wiping the cotton bud along the edges and lengths of the lashes
- It may help if you tilt the lid outward using a finger from your other hand.
- The upper lid is more difficult to clean. It is best done with the eyelid closed and pulled slightly over the lower lid. This makes sure that you cannot poke yourself in the eye.
- Do this to each lid twice a day initially, then reduced to once daily as symptoms improve:



Diet

There is some evidence to suggest a diet high in omega-3 fats can help improve blepharitis. The best sources of omega-3s are oily fish, such as:

- mackerel
- salmon
- sardines
- herring
- fresh or frozen tuna – not canned, as the canning process sometimes removes the beneficial oils

Aim to eat at least two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily fish.

You can also get omega-3s from various nuts and seeds, vegetable oils, soya and soya products, and green leafy vegetables. Omega 7 or sea buckthorn oil has also been found to be helpful.

If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU where you were seen.

If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant Emergency Department (ED) / Minor Injury Unit (MIU):

Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056

Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU: 01443 802353 or 802349

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

References:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blepharitis/treatment/>
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/blepharitis#!scenario>

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**