

# 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'. The most important treatment is good eye care, known as "lid hygiene". This includes even when symptoms are not there, to reduce frequency and 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 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.
- Avoid wearing contact lens especially during acute episode
- Dry eyes can be treated with artificial tear drops

## Eyelid hygiene

This is a daily routine that consists of three parts - warmth, massage and cleaning – with the aim of encouraging healthy tears to lubricate the eye and reduce inflammation.

### Warmth:

Use a flannel soaked in warm water, or specially designed reusable heat bag, hold it on your closed eyelid for 5 to 10 minutes to soften the oil in the glands. Make sure you don't burn your skin

**Massage:** This should always be done immediately after you have warmed the eyelids. Use your index finger to apply pressure to the eyelid whilst slowly rolling it towards the eyelashes - sweeping downwards when moving along the upper eyelid, and upwards when moving along the lower eyelid. This means you are moving the oily secretions towards the edge of the eyelid so that they can come out of the glands. Repeat this massage action 5 to 10 times over about 30 seconds - massaging should be relatively comfortable and you should not press hard enough to hurt your eyeball under the closed eyelids.

## **Cleaning**

- Moisten a cotton wool or cotton bud with cooled water that has recently been boiled (you could also use a baby shampoo diluted 1:10 with warm water) or use commercially available eyelid wipes, gently wipe along the lid margins and length of the eye lashes to clear any debris.
- 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 can't poke yourself in the eye.

You should do the above routine - warmth, massage, clean - at least twice a day until symptoms settle, then once a day, every day, to prevent further flare-ups. If you are prone to blepharitis, it is best to think of this as part of your daily routine - just like brushing your teeth. This is the best way to keep symptoms away, or to a minimum.

**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/Minor Injury Unit (MIU):**  
**Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056**  
**Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073**  
**Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353**  
**GUH: 01633 493287**  
**Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

## **References:**

Blepharitis - NHS

Blepharitis (Patient info) : Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment

Scenario: Management of blepharitis | Management | Blepharitis | CKS | NICE

**This document is available in Welsh/  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**