

BLEPHARITIS

Blepharitis is a common condition that affects the eyelids. There are two main types:

1. Inflammation of the eyelid margins resulting in crusts on the eyelashes, similar to dandruff. These crusts can fall into the eyes and may give the feeling of grittiness. Constant rubbing may lead to watering and further irritation.
2. Blockage of the meibomian glands which open onto the lid margins just behind the lashes. These normally produce oil which stops the tears from evaporating.

It is associated with dandruff and some skin conditions, and it can be very persistent and recurrent. Some forms are allergic, which can be triggered by pollen, hairspray, cat fur or irritants such as cosmetics or cigarette smoke.

TREATMENT

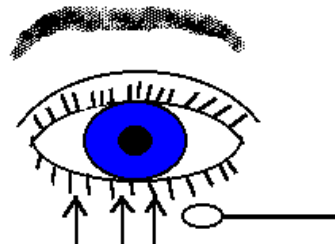
The irritation may be relieved by one or all of the following methods performed twice daily for up to four weeks. This will help to control the blepharitis, but will not cure it.

Hot compresses

Use a clean flannel or cotton wool ball, soaked in boiled then cooled, hot water (not TOO hot). Wring it out and hold it against the closed eye. This melts the plugs of "wax". Then, using a cotton bud moistened in hot water, firmly massage the whole width of outside of the lids as shown below. The aim is to try and dislodge the plugs that have just been melted.



Downwards on top lid



Upwards on bottom lid

Cleaning

Use one of the following solution:

- Lid-Care (ready prepared solution) or Lid-Care Wipes
- Sodium Bicarbonate – ¼ teaspoon to cup Cooled Boiled Water
- Diluted "Johnson's Baby Shampoo" – 4 drops to ¼ cup Cooled Boiled Water

Dip a fresh cotton bud into the solution and clean away any crusts that are present. Use small circular movements all the way along the outside of the lid margins at the point where the eyelashes emerge. Do not dip a used bud into the solution. Use a new cotton bud for each eye.



In some people the symptoms can become quite severe. These cases may require referral to an Ophthalmologist for investigation of any underlying cause, and sometimes treatment with antibiotics. It is very difficult to completely cure the condition and treatments are aimed at control. For effective control, perseverance with the regime is essential - often indefinitely.