

Blepharitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a common and inflammation of the eyelids. include irritation, itching, an ally, a red eye.

This condition frequently occurs in people who have a tendency towards oily skin, dandruff, or dry eyes. Blepharitis can begin in early childhood, producing granulated eyelids, and continue throughout life as a chronic condition, or develop later in life.

Bacteria reside on the surface of every one's skin, but in certain individuals they thrive in the skin at the base of the eye lashes. The resulting irritation, some times associated with overactivity of the nearby oil glands, causes dandruff-like scales and particles to form along the lashes and eyelid margins.



In blepharitis, both upper and lower eyelids become coated with oily debris and bacteria near the base of the eyelashes. The eye feels irritated and may become inflamed. Regular, thorough cleansing of the lid margin helps control blepharitis.

Sometimes the scaling or bacteria produce only minor irritation and itching, but in some they may cause redness, stinging or burning. Some people may develop a sensitivity to the scales or to the bacteria which surround them. This can lead to a more serious complication inflammation of the eye tissues, particularly the cornea (the clear front window of the eye)

How is blepharitis treated?

Blepharitis is a condition that may not be cured, but can be controlled with a few simple daily measures:

- At least twice a day, wet a washcloth with comfortably warm water, wring it out, and place over the closed eye lids for a minute. Rewet it as it cools, two or three times. This will soften and loosen scales and debris. More importantly, it helps liquefy the oily secretions from the eyelids' oil glands that help prevent the development of a chalazion, an inflamed lump in an eyelid oil gland.
- With your finger covered with a thin washcloth, cotton swab, or commercial lint-free pad, gently scrub the base of the lashes about 15 seconds per lid.
- If an antibiotic ointment has been prescribed, apply a dab at the base of the lashes (usually at bedtime), using your fingertip or a cotton swab.

Simple, daily hygienic measures will minimize the following additional medications that might be needed to control blepharitis and its symptoms:

- Artificial tears maybe used to relieve symptoms of dry eye. (These are eye drops that are available without a prescription.)
- Steroid eye drops may be used short-term to decrease inflammation.
- Antibiotic ointment or antibiotic pills may be used to decrease the bacterial content of the eyelids.

Medications alone are not sufficient; the application of warmth and detailed cleansing of the lashes daily is the key controlling blepharitis.

Why are regular medical eye examinations important for everyone?

Eye disease can occur at any age. Many eye diseases do not cause symptoms until the disease has done damage. Since most blindness is preventable if diagnosed and treated early, regular medical examinations by an ophthalmologist are very important.

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