

BLEPHARITIS

Patient Information

What is Blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a long lasting or chronic inflammation of the edges of the eyelids. This gives rise to itching and a general soreness and often makes the lids look red with crusting around the eyelashes.

What treatment will I need?

The treatment of Blepharitis is that of control rather than cure.

Treatment therefore needs to go on for a very long time, often years, before the condition disappears entirely and for some patients it is a problem throughout their lives.

The redness and discomfort is often made worse by irritants in the air about us including cigarette smoke, fumes from cooking and occasionally cosmetics such as mascara.

Things you will need

- Cooled boiled water. This should be used fresh and should not be kept in a container in the fridge.
- Clean cotton wool buds that are sold in the chemists.
- It is best not to use cotton wool balls as the strands can get stuck in amongst the eyelashes and irritate your eyes.
- A mirror, well lit and at eye level.
- A nearby wash basin to wash your hands before you touch your eye, a clean surface such as toilet tissue on a table to keep the above items clean.

What to do

1. Wash your hands before you start.
2. Use a clean flannel soaked in hot water as a compress to the eyelids or an EyeBag (available from most pharmacies and optometrists and online). Apply the compress for 5 minutes once or twice daily.
3. Massage the eyelids with the cotton wool bud by rolling the tip towards the lashes.

4. Use a clean cotton wool bud dipped into cooled boiled water to sweep crusts and flakes gently from the base of the eyelashes. Repeat, using a clean cotton wool bud each time, until your eyelids look and feel clean with all crusts removed. Dispose of the used cotton buds and wash your hands again. An alternative to a cotton bud is to use an eyelid wipe such as Blephaclean, IcuSoft or Lumecare (available from pharmacies).

If you have been instructed to use ointment in addition to the cleaning process described above, then apply a little on your forefinger and gently rub in amongst the eyelashes. This should be done before you go to bed each night.

5. Repeat this process twice daily when the condition is at its worst but reducing to once daily as it improves, so that you can keep the blepharitis under control.
6. Flax seed oil or sea buckthorn supplements are helpful for some people

If you would like further advice or have any questions you are advised to contact any of the following:

Ophthalmic Outpatients Department on 01603 288066

This information leaflet is one of a series produced for patients and is aimed at answering questions on the care of common eye conditions.