



# BLEPHARITIS



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Inflammation (redness and soreness) of the eyelid edges. It usually involves the eyelids and eyelashes. It can also include the glands that lubricate the lid, and the white area of the eye.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Redness and greasy flakes on the eyelid edges.
- Small sores on the eyelid. Crusts may form on the edges of the eyelid.
- Discharge from the lids during sleep. Lids may be stuck together in the morning.
- A feeling that something is in the eye. This can cause itching, burning, redness, and swelling of the lid. May also have tearing and be sensitive to bright light.
- Eye may become irritated if flakes from the lid fall into the eye.
- Eyelashes that fall out.

### CAUSES

- Seborrhic blepharitis is caused by a skin condition called seborrhea. It is similar to dandruff.
- Bacterial infection of the eyelash follicles and the glands that lubricate the eye. The infection cannot be spread from one person to another.
- Plugged glands on the eyelid.
- Allergies or lice in the eyelashes.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Dermatitis (skin infection) of the scalp and other body parts.
- Acne rosacea.
- Exposure to allergens (substances that cause allergic reactions).
- Exposure to chemical or environmental irritants, such as smoke or smog.
- Work that keeps the hands dirty for most of the day.
- Advanced age.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Wash hands often, and dry them with clean towels.
- Keep face, eyelids, and scalp clean.
- Avoid places that have lots of dust or other irritating substances.
- Get treatment for any skin disorders.
- Control scalp problems with antidandruff shampoos.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Symptoms can be improved with treatment. The condition is often chronic and the symptoms come and go. If treatment is stopped, it tends to recur. It is usually not a

serious condition.

## **POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS**

- Styes or chalazia (blocked oil gland on the eyelid).
- Conjunctivitis (eye inflammation).
- Loss of eyelashes.
- Ulceration of the cornea (the covering of the eye).
- Scarred eyelids.



## **DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT**

### **GENERAL MEASURES**

- Your health care provider can diagnose blepharitis by an exam of the affected eyelid area. Other medical tests are not usually needed.
- Treatment will be prescribed for any problem that is causing the disorder or any complications.
- Use warm-water soaks to reduce discomfort and speed healing. Apply soaks for 20 minutes, then rest at least 1 hour. Repeat as often as needed.
- Wash the eyelid edge and eyelashes twice a day. Use a baby shampoo diluted with some water, or a commercial eyelid cleanser. Use a washcloth wrapped around the index finger or cotton swabs. Don't rub too hard, as it can lead to irritation. Rinse with warm water and then dry the area.
- Avoid use of eye makeup until symptoms improve. When used, be sure to remove it each night at bedtime.
- Ask your health care provider about using contact lenses while you have the symptoms.

### **MEDICATIONS**

- Eye drops or ointment may be prescribed for use after the eyelid area is cleaned.
- Drugs to be taken by mouth may be prescribed in more severe cases.

### **ACTIVITY**

No limits.

### **DIET**

No special diet.



## **NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF**

- You or a family member has symptoms of blepharitis.
- You have pain in the eye(s).
- Your vision changes.
- Symptoms recur after treatment.

