

BLEPHARITIS

Blepharitis is a chronic or long term inflammation of the eyelids and eyelashes. It affects people of all ages.

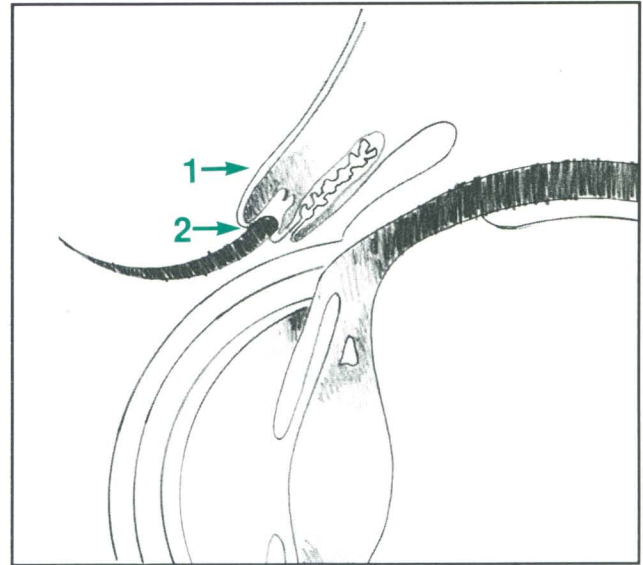
Among the most common causes of blepharitis are:

- poor eyelid hygiene
- excess oil produced by the glands in the eyelids
- a bacterial infection (often staphylococcal)
- an allergic reaction

There are two ways in which blepharitis may appear. The most common and least severe, seborrheic blepharitis, is often associated with dandruff of the scalp or skin conditions like acne. It usually appears as greasy flakes or scales around the base of the eyelashes and as a mild redness of the eyelid.

Sometimes, it may result in a roughness of the (normally smooth) tissue that lines the inside of the eyelids; or chalazia, which are nodules on the eyelids (often painless and firm in texture). And, acute infection of the eyelids can result in styes.

Ulcerative blepharitis is a less common, but more severe condition that may be characterized by matted, hard crusts around the eyelashes, which, when removed, leave small sores that may bleed or ooze. There may also be a loss of eyelashes, distortion of the front edges of the eyelids and chronic tearing.



Blepharitis is a chronic inflammation that affects the eyelids (1) and the eyelash hair follicles (2). Careful eyelid hygiene can do much to control blepharitis.

In severe cases, the cornea, the transparent covering of the front of the eyeball, may also become inflamed.

In many cases, good eyelid hygiene and a regular cleaning routine may control blepharitis. This routine can include:

- frequent scalp and face washing
- warm soaks of the eyelids
- eyelid scrubs

In cases where bacterial infection is the cause, eyelid hygiene may be combined with various antibiotics and other medications; and

(over, please)

if the cause is an allergic reaction, the source of the reaction (eye makeup, for example) should be removed.

Eyelid hygiene, in all cases, is particularly important upon awakening because debris can build up during sleep.

Blepharitis is usually not serious and can often be treated easily, but if left untreated, can be very uncomfortable, unattractive and lead to more serious problems.

Directions For A Warm Soak Of The Eyelids

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Moisten a clean washcloth with warm water.
3. Close eyes and place washcloth on eyelids for about 5 minutes.
4. Repeat several times daily.

Your doctor of optometry can determine the cause and recommend the right combination of treatment specifically for you.

Directions For An Eyelid Scrub

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Mix warm water and a small amount of shampoo that does not irritate the eye (baby shampoo).*
3. Close one eye and using a clean washcloth (a different one for each eye) rub the shampoo mixture back and forth across the eyelashes and the edge of the eyelid.
4. Rinse with clear, cool water.
5. Repeat on other eye.

* There are also commercially prepared lid scrub solutions that your doctor of optometry may recommend.