

BLEPHARITIS

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is inflammation of the edges of the eyelids. It causes the eyes to feel sore and gritty. It can be a troublesome and recurring condition with no one-off cure, however, once symptoms have improved, daily hygiene can usually keep the symptoms to a minimum. Eyesight is rarely affected. It occurs in three forms:

- **Anterior blepharitis:** the inflammation affects the outside front edge of your eyelids, where your eyelashes are connected.
- **Posterior blepharitis:** the inflammation affects the inside front edge of your eyelids, where they come into contact with your eye.
- **Mixed blepharitis:** a combination of anterior and posterior blepharitis.

What are the symptoms of blepharitis?

- Sore eyelids; both eyes are usually affected.
- The eyes may feel gritty, itchy, or as though they are burning
- The eyelids may look inflamed or greasy.
- The eyelids may become sticky with discharge, particularly in the morning.
- Tiny flakes or scales may appear on the eyelids; crusts may develop at the base of the eyelids.
- One or more of the Meibomian glands, tiny oil glands which line the margin of the eyelids, may block and fill with an oily fluid.

Symptoms often come and go, flaring up from time to time, but you may have long periods without any symptoms.

What is the treatment for blepharitis?

Blepharitis cannot usually be cured but the symptoms can be controlled with good eyelid hygiene. Symptoms can be eased and kept to a minimum. The aim of treatment is to control or manage the condition, not to cure it.

Eyelid hygiene:

This is the most important part of the treatment and prevention of blepharitis. The aim is to soothe the eyelids, unplug the Meibomian glands and clear out any stagnant oily secretions. This is a daily routine that consists of the three parts – warmth, massage, and cleansing.

- **Warmth:** this is to soften the skin and any crusts attached to the eyelids as well as to unplug any blocked glands. This should be done by pressing on the eyelids gently with a clean warm water flannel. Ideally this should take

up to 5-10 minutes. An alternative is to use a proprietary heating device and you can consult your pharmacist for advice on this, or you can be prescribed Meibopatch for use on your eyelids.

- **Massage:** immediately after the warmth you should massage over closed eyes as this helps push out the oily fluid from the Meibomian glands. It should not be so firm as to actually hurt your eyeball. Massage downwards for the upper lid, towards the eyelashes and upwards for the lower lid. Ideally this should be repeated 5-10 times for each eyelid for both eyes. Please remember to wash your hands between eyes.
- **Clean:** Wash the eyelids with a Blephasol solution on a gauze pad. An alternative can be to use water and gauze. **Do not use cotton wool as this can leave small bits behind.**