



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Marginal Keratitis

Information for patients



Oxford Eye Hospital

What is marginal keratitis?

Marginal keratitis is inflammation at the edge of the cornea, the clear front surface of the eye. It is usually linked to **blepharitis**, a common condition in which eyelid glands become blocked and irritated. Occasionally, marginal keratitis can be related to wearing contact lenses.

Blepharitis may cause:

- Red, sore eyelids
- Flakes or crusts around the eyelashes
- Irritation due to sensitivity to naturally occurring skin bacteria.

When the cornea becomes inflamed, the eye may turn red and painful and can develop small white ulcers around the edge. This flare-up is called marginal keratitis.

Symptoms

You may notice:

- Red, gritty or painful eyes.
- Light sensitivity.
- Blurred vision during flare-ups.
- Foreign-body sensation.
- Watering or irritation.

Treatment options

The main aim is to control the underlying blepharitis to prevent recurrences.

1. Daily lid hygiene (once or twice a day):

- » Warm compresses
- » Use comfortably hot water
- » Hold a clean flannel or cotton pads over closed eyelids for 2-3 minutes
- » Helps soften blocked oils

2. Lid massage

- » Gently roll your finger along the eyelids toward the eyelashes
- » Encourages oil flow from glands

3. Lid cleaning (scrubs)

- » Use a moistened cotton bud to clean the eyelid edges and remove flakes
- » Best done in front of a mirror

Medicated treatments (if prescribed):

- Antibiotic eye drops or ointment.
- Steroid eye drops to reduce inflammation.

Your eye specialist will advise what is appropriate for you.

Contact lenses may need to be avoided during treatment.

For help with lid hygiene, search online for **“lid hygiene video NHS”** for trusted demonstrations.

When to seek urgent advice

Contact the hospital or attend an Emergency Department if:

- The eye becomes more painful or red.
- Vision becomes increasingly blurred.
- White patches on the cornea become larger.
- You are worried your symptoms are worsening.

Contacting us

If you have a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist.

Call our specialist telephone triage number if you need **URGENT** help or advice or if you notice:

- Redness and/or swelling of your eye lids and/or eyeball
- Any loss of sight
- Intense pain

Telephone: **01865 234 567**, select the option for “Eye Emergencies”

Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

Saturday and Sunday 8:30am to 3:30pm (including Bank Holidays)

You will be able to speak to an ophthalmic health professional who will advise you.

If you need advice out of hours, please phone **NHS 111** or your out of hours GP practice.

Further information:

Visit the NHS Website – www.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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