

Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals **NHS**

NHS Trust

Oxford Eye Hospital

Blepharitis

Information for patients



Blepharitis

This is a common condition. Small glands in the eyelids which produce oils become blocked-up. This results in inflammation (redness and swelling) of the eyelids. It is not a sight-threatening condition, but can be persistent and can affect people of all ages.

Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of blepharitis include:

- Red, inflamed, swollen eyelids
- Sore eyes
- Itching, irritation, discomfort
- Crusting around the eye lashes
- Tiny flakes, scales or crusts at the base of the eyelashes that resembles fine dandruff
- Sticky eyelids, especially when you wake up

Treatment

Blepharitis tends to be a long term condition but symptoms can be relieved by a combination of some of the following preventative measures and treatments.

Hot Compresses

Hold cotton facial pads soaked in hot water against your closed eyelids for 5 minutes, being careful that the temperature is not so hot that it burns the skin. Repeat twice a day. This helps to melt the oils in the blocked glands, allowing the oils to flow more freely.

Lid massage

First, wash your hands. Then, using the tip of your finger, or a clean cotton bud, firmly stroke the skin of the top eyelids towards the base of the lashes. Continue to do this across the whole width of the upper and lower eyelid. This will help to unblock the oil glands and squeeze out the oils.

Cleaning

Use a solution of either:

- A pinch of bicarbonate of soda in a cup of cooled boiled water
- A teaspoon of 'no tears' baby shampoo in a cup of cooled boiled water
- Cooled boiled water only

Prepare fresh solution each time you clean your eyes.

Method

Dip a clean cotton bud in the solution and clean away any crusts present on the eyelashes. A cosmetic or magnifying mirror may be helpful. Do not clean inside the eye lids as this will make them sore. Use a clean cotton bud for each eye and repeat the process twice a day. If you use baby shampoo, wipe the eyes with clean water afterwards.

Antibiotic treatment

If your eyelids are infected you will need to take a course of antibiotics, which come in several forms:

Tablets

The course may last several weeks and you should take the complete course. Any side effects such as gastric (tummy) upset or skin rashes should be reported to either the Eye Hospital or your GP as soon as possible.

Ointment

Apply the ointment to the outer edge of the eyelids as often as instructed.

Drops

Gently pull the lower eyelid forward to form a small pocket and instil 1 drop, being careful not to touch the eye. Close the eye for a few moments afterwards to allow the drop to be absorbed. If we have given you ointment as well, it is important to apply the drops **FIRST**.

How to contact us

We hope you find this information leaflet helpful. However, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask one of the eye nurses, or telephone the Eye Hospital on:

Eye Outpatients (01865) 231099

8.30am - 5 pm

Eye Emergency Department (01865) 234800

8.30am - 6pm Monday - Friday

10am - 4pm Saturday and Sunday

Further information

Please see our Ophthalmology (The Oxford Eye Hospital) page on the Trust website:

<http://www.oxfordradcliffe.nhs.uk/home.aspx>

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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