



OREGON EYE SPECIALISTS, P.C.

PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS
DISEASES & MICROSURGERY OF THE EYE

BLEPHARITIS

Blepharitis is a common inflammation of the eyelids involving the lashes and lid margins. It can produce eyelid matting and cause ocular burning, itching, and irritation. It can also cause blurred vision. Several methods are often helpful in controlling blepharitis and its symptoms.

For mild symptoms:

Simply take a clean washcloth and soak it with hot water from the faucet: hot to touch but not to burn. Squeeze out the excess water, close your eye and brush each closed eye with the washcloth for several seconds. Once a day is often sufficient.

For more severe symptoms:

The following should be performed twice a day:

Follow the same instructions as for mild symptoms, keeping the hot washcloth over your eyelids for 5 minutes. Re-warm the cloth when it becomes cool. ("Hot packs.")

Next, drape a warm, damp washcloth over our fingertips on one hand and place a small amount of Johnson and Johnson "No More Tears" baby shampoo on the washcloth; close your eyes and gently scrub along the eyelashes for several seconds. Rinse and dry the eyelids before reopening your eyes. ("Lid scrubs".) You may also use one of the commercially available eyelid scrubs to cleanse your lashes (e.g., Ocusoft, EYEscrub, OcuClenz, LID WIPES-SPF). If you do this, you must still do the 5 minute hot pack first.

Artificial tears can be used as often as necessary to treat the irritation and burning, as well as the blurred vision (e.g., Theratears, Genteal, Hypotears, Tears Naturale, Bion Tears, Optive, Systane, Celluvisc, Bausch and Lomb Moisture Eyes). Don't buy anything that says it gets the red out. If you find that the drops burn, buy a preservative-free preparation.

Sometimes you will be prescribed an antibiotic ointment to help treat the blepharitis. Apply a small amount of the ointment on a clean fingertip or Q-tip and, with the eye closed, massage it into the base of the eyelashes. This is best done after the lashes are cleansed as outlined above. Use the ointment just prior to bedtime, as it will get into your eyes and blur your vision.

Omega 3 fatty acids (2-3 grams combined-not each) and flaxseed oil taken orally may also help, but don't expect a benefit for at least 3 months. Theratears makes a pill called Theratears nutrition that is specifically for this problem (2 pills twice daily). It also works well in dry eye syndrome. Doxycycline, tetracycline, and minocycline are also prescribed for some patients; once again, don't expect a benefit from one of these immediately - it usually takes at least 6 weeks to see and feel noticeable results. You often have to stay on the drug indefinitely for lasting relief.

Blepharitis is a chronic condition and therefore a daily single soak/scrub is usually required in indefinitely for continued eye comfort.