



Patient & Family Guide  
2021

# Blepharospasm (Eyelid Twitching)



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Blepharospasm (Eyelid Twitching)

## What is blepharospasm?

- Blepharospasm (also called benign essential blepharospasm) is a rare condition that affects the eyelid muscles on both sides of your face.
- It causes eyelid twitching or blinking that you cannot control.
- In severe (very bad) cases, blepharospasm can affect your ability to see.

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

## **What are the symptoms of blepharospasm?**

Blepharospasm usually starts as a few small twitches that only happen once in awhile. Over time, the twitches may become stronger and happen more often. They may prevent you from keeping your eyes open.

For some people, this can make it hard to do everyday activities, like driving or reading. Some people may also have twitches in other areas of their face.

## **What causes blepharospasm?**

The cause of blepharospasm is not known. Many doctors believe that it is caused by the area of the brain responsible for opening and closing the eyelids not working properly. This does not affect other areas of your brain.

## **Who can get blepharospasm?**

Blepharospasm can happen to anyone. It may run in families and is most common in females over the age of 40.

## **How is blepharospasm diagnosed?**

Your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) will do an eye exam to check for blepharospasm. They will also ask questions about your symptoms, your medical history, and your family's medical history.

## How is blepharospasm treated?

Blepharospasm is a chronic (long-term) condition. There is no cure, but there are treatments that can help you manage your symptoms. Treatments include:

- **Injections:** Your ophthalmologist can inject a medication called Botox<sup>®</sup> into your eyelid muscles to stop them from twitching. You may need an injection every 3 to 4 months. For more information, see the pamphlet *Botox<sup>®</sup> Injection*:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/0282.pdf](http://www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/0282.pdf)
- **Surgery:** If Botox<sup>®</sup> injections do not help, your ophthalmologist may suggest surgery to remove parts of the eyelid muscle or nerve.

## What can I do to help?

- Use over-the-counter artificial tears (with no preservatives) regularly to prevent your eyes from getting dry.
- Lower the brightness of screens (like TVs, computers, tablets, or smartphones).
- Sunglasses with a special tint (called FL-41) can help to minimize discomfort. Ask your ophthalmologist to find out if these may be right for you.
- Stay well hydrated (drink enough water).
- Avoid drinks with caffeine.
- Try to get enough sleep.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

# Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.*

*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

*Prepared by: Eye Care Centre*

*Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services*

The information in this pamphlet is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

WW85-2241 © November 2021 Nova Scotia Health Authority

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.