



Patient & Family Guide
2020

Blepharitis



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Blepharitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a chronic inflammation of the eyelids. It is a common problem.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Irritation or a feeling like there is something in your eye.
- Redness, burning, and itching of your eyelids.
- Eyelid margins are red, with scales and flakes at the base of the lashes.
- In the morning, your eyelids may feel sticky with crusted scales and debris. This is caused by an oily discharge from the eyelid glands.
- If untreated, these glands may become plugged and infected. This may lead to recurring styes, dry eye syndrome, and a loss of lashes.



Normal eye



Eye with blepharitis

How is blepharitis treated?

Blepharitis is usually a chronic condition. However, early diagnosis, and proper treatment are key to controlling the symptoms and preventing your condition from getting worse.

Eyelid hygiene

Your eye doctor may recommend one or more of the steps that follow.

- warm compress

This loosens the crust on your eyelids and eyelashes before you clean them. The warmth also can loosen blocked residue in the glands in your eyelids.

To use a warm compress:

- › Wash your hands. Dampen a clean face cloth with warm water.
- › Place the face cloth over your closed eyes for 5 minutes, several times a day.

Cleaning the eyelids

This is **essential** in blepharitis treatment. Your eye doctor will recommend what cleansing agent to use:

- warm water only
- baby shampoo diluted (watered down) with warm water (1:4 dilution)
- tea tree oil-based cleansers
- over-the-counter eyelid wipes

To clean the eyelids:

1. Wash your hands, then dip a clean face cloth or gauze pad into your cleaning solution.
2. Squeeze out any extra moisture.
3. Gently wipe across your lashes and lid margins with your eyes closed.
4. Rinse eye area with cool water.
5. Repeat the steps for your other eye, using a fresh face cloth or pad.



Wiping eye
with pad

Relieving blepharitis symptoms

Because blepharitis and dry eyes commonly happen together, your eye doctor may tell you to use over-the-counter or prescription eye drops to help relieve symptoms.

- moisture drops

- › most patients with dry eye disease need tear supplements. These come in many forms and name brands. They are recommended by your eye doctor based on the thickness of the drops and whether they have preservatives.
- › you may need to try different products to find out which one works best for you.

The following products can be bought over the counter (no prescription needed):

- artificial tears
- gel drops
- gels
- preservative-free tears

Please ask your pharmacist about available options.

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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>

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