



Patient & Family Guide
2023

Blepharitis



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Blepharitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a chronic (ongoing) inflammation (swelling) of the eyelids. It is a common problem.

What are the symptoms?

- Irritation or feeling like there is something in your eye
- Redness, burning, and itching of your eyelids
- Edges of your eyelids are red, with scales and flakes at the base of your eyelashes
- Your eyelids may feel sticky in the morning. This is caused by an oily discharge from your eyelid glands.
 - › If blepharitis is not treated, these glands may become blocked and infected. This may lead to styes (painful lumps) that keep coming back, dry eye syndrome (this is a condition where the eyelids are not able to make enough tears to lubricate the surface of the eye), and a loss of lashes.



Healthy eye



Eye with blepharitis

How is blepharitis treated?

- Blepharitis is usually chronic. You can control your symptoms and keep your condition from getting worse by:
 - › getting diagnosed early.
 - › getting proper treatment.

Keeping your eyelids clean

- If you have blepharitis, you must clean your eyelids.
- Your eye doctor may suggest 1 or more of the following:
 - A warm compress
 - › This helps to loosen the crust on your eyelids and lashes before you clean them. The warmth can also loosen blocked oil in the glands.

To use a warm compress:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Dampen a clean facecloth with warm water.
3. Place the facecloth over your closed eyes for 5 minutes at a time. Do this several times a day.

A warm compress bundle

To create a warm compress bundle:

1. Dampen 5 to 6 microfiber cloths with lukewarm water. Squeeze out any extra water.
2. Roll the first towel into a tight roll.
3. Wrap the remaining towels around the first towel, to create a large bundle.
4. Place the bundle in a container with a lid.
5. Heat the container for 1 ½ minutes in a microwave.
6. Place the bundle over your eye.
7. Remove the outer towel every 2 minutes. Do this for about 5 minutes on each eye.

Cleaning your eyelids

- Your eye doctor will suggest a cleaner, like:
 - Warm water only
 - Baby shampoo watered down with warm water (mix 1 part shampoo with 4 parts water)
 - Tea tree oil
 - Over-the-counter eyelid wipes (like Systane® Lid Wipes)
- Talk with your eye doctor about which cleaner is right for you.

To clean your eyelids:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Dip a clean facecloth or gauze pad into the cleaning solution.
3. Squeeze out any extra solution.
4. Close your eye and gently wipe across the lashes and the edges of your lids.
5. Rinse your eye area with cool water.
6. Use a fresh facecloth or gauze pad and repeat steps 2 to 5 for your other eye.

Wiping eye with pad



What can I do to help my symptoms?

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

Eye drops

- Most people with dry eye syndrome need tear supplements. These come in many forms and brands. Your eye doctor will recommend which tear supplement to try.

- You may need to try different products to find out which one works best for you.
- You can buy the following products over-the-counter (without a prescription):
 - Artificial tears
 - Preservative-free tears
 - Gels
 - Gel drops

Prescription medication

- Apply an antibiotic ointment to your eyelids.
- Take an oral (by mouth) antibiotic pill. This will lower inflammation.

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!

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

