

SpaMedica



Blepharitis & Cataract Surgery

Information booklet for patients



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Blepharitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a long-term and recurring inflammation of the eyelids which can cause discomfort.

Blepharitis can affect people of any age and usually affects both eyes. It is often caused by bacterial infection, such as *Staphylococcus Aureus* or *Staphylococcus Epidermis*, but can also be caused by poor hygiene, excess oil production from the eyelid glands and the skin condition acne rosacea.

Blepharitis is usually found at the edges of the eyelid, known as the 'margin', and can also be associated with conjunctivitis.

If left untreated, blepharitis will not go away; the symptoms will persist.

Signs and symptoms of blepharitis

- Eyelid irritation
- Reddened eyelids
- Swelling of the lid margins
- Scales on the eyelids
- Burning sensation
- Itching eyelids
- Loss of eyelashes
- Sticky eyelids - particularly on waking up in the morning
- Dry eyes due to poor tear film quality

Treating blepharitis

Fortunately, blepharitis can be treated (although the condition may come back). For most people, a simple eyelid hygiene routine designed to remove bacteria and draw out oil from the blocked eyelid glands is enough.

If the routine is followed carefully and consistently, many patients are able to keep their blepharitis under control without using any medication.

The three step routine

There are three steps which should be followed and repeated once or twice a day to ensure the eyelids are clean and to maintain good lid hygiene. These are:

- Warm compress
- Eyelid massage
- Lid margin hygiene

If you wear contact lenses, you should remove these before beginning the routine. Always wash your hands thoroughly before and after cleaning the eyelids.

Warm compress

Applying a warm compress to the eyes can relieve the soreness and itching of blepharitis. To make a warm compress:

- Take a clean flannel and moisten it under warm running water (or as hot as is comfortable without it burning the skin).
- Close your eyes and place the flannel over the eyelids.
- Leave for 5-10 minutes.

The warm compress will help melt and release the oils in the blocked eyelid glands. It should be used twice a day -morning and night- for one month, then repeated twice a week, even when there is no more crusting of the eyelid and the condition appears to have cleared. Doing so will help prevent blepharitis from returning.

Some people find a microwaveable eye mask to be useful and more convenient. If you choose to use an eye mask like this, always clean it before and after use, and follow the manufacturers' instructions for use carefully.

Eyelid massage

Massaging the eyelids helps to gently push the melted oils out of the eyelid glands. To massage the eyelids:

- Close your eyes. Gently roll your little finger in a circular motion across the surface of the eyelid. This action will help express the oils, although you will

not notice this happening as the droplets are minuscule.

- Take a cotton wool bud and, with your eyes closed, gently roll it sideways across the length of the upper and lower eyelids. This action will remove residue from the melted oils.
- If the oils in the eyelid glands have stagnated over time their chemical structure may have altered, and the eyes may be irritated when the oils are expressed. This is completely normal and should get better once the blepharitis has been brought under control.

Lid margin hygiene

Cleaning the eyelid margin removes the expressed oils and any bacteria which may have accumulated along the lash line. It will also remove any remaining crusts. You can clean your eyelids in the following way:

- Boil a pint of water, allow it to cool and then take an eggcup full.
- Soak a clean, lint-free cotton wool pad (NOT cotton wool balls) in the warm water, then wipe gently and carefully over one eye.
- Throw the pad away and repeat the process on the other eye.
- Repeat the process for both eyes if necessary, using a new cotton wool pad each time and on each eye.
- When wiping, pay special attention to the root, base and length of the eye lashes to remove crustiness from these areas.
- Be sure to prepare fresh water and use a fresh cotton wool pad/bud each time you clean your eye.

Specially formulated lid-cleansing solutions, such as Blephasol lotion or Blephaclean wipes, can also be bought from your local optician or pharmacy.

Should the infection not improve after a week, you should seek professional advice from your doctor.

Other treatment options

Antibiotic ointment may be prescribed as a short-term measure to get blepharitis under control. If you are prescribed ointment, follow the instructions for use carefully and only use the ointment for the length of time it is prescribed for.

If your blepharitis accompanies other skin problems, you may be prescribed antibiotic tablets such as doxycycline, but this is not usually necessary.

Specially formulated wipes and solutions to help treat blepharitis are available to buy, but are not provided on the NHS. Speak to your GP or local optician for more information on these products.

Tips and advice to help with blepharitis

It is very important to maintain good hygiene and keep the eyes clean at all times, even after blepharitis has cleared up. If the hygiene routine is stopped, blepharitis may return. To maintain high levels of hygiene:

- Wash your face at least twice a day.
- Keep hair clean and free from dandruff. If you suffer with dandruff, an anti-dandruff shampoo can solve the problem.
- Never share towels, face cloths or flannels. Ideally, use clean towels every day.
- If you wear eye makeup, always remove it completely before going to bed.
- Do not share your makeup (particularly products for the eyes) and do not use anyone else's.
- Once the blepharitis has cleared up, clean the lid margins once or twice a week following the instructions in this booklet.
- If you have been prescribed medication, continue to use this as instructed.

Complications of blepharitis

Sometimes, blepharitis can cause complications. These include:

- Chronic (long-term or recurring) infection
- Loss of eyelashes
- Conjunctivitis
- Corneal ulceration
- In-growing eyelashes (trichiasis)
- Scarring of the eyelid
- Cancellation of planned eye surgery

Will blepharitis return?

Unfortunately, if you stop performing the eyelid hygiene routine it is likely that blepharitis will return. Many patients have to continue the lid hygiene for a long period of time, or even forever, to stop blepharitis from recurring.

If you have stopped the eyelid hygiene routine and blepharitis returns, you should resume the hygiene routine as soon as possible.

I am due to have cataract surgery - will blepharitis affect this?

As there is no cure for blepharitis, our aim is to bring it under optimal control to minimise the risk of blepharitis interfering with the outcome of cataract surgery. If blepharitis persists despite treatment then the lids may be cleaned and scrubbed before cataract surgery begins.

Any patient with a diagnosis of blepharitis at pre-assessment clinic will be given a theatre slot providing that lid hygiene is explained in detail and performed daily; the consultant can increase the treatment regime as they see clinically fit; the patient is aware they will be re-assessed on the day of surgery to check the blepharitis has been adequately treated; the consultant has the discretion to cancel the procedure on the day of surgery if the patient is deemed unfit upon assessment.

Communication

Telephone calls

In the interest of continually improving our service to patients, calls to the hospital may be monitored and/or recorded.

Complaints and feedback

SpaMedica is strongly committed to listening to our patients. Our complaints policy is built on guidance and statutory requirements under the legal framework of the NHS complaints procedure.

The policy sets clear guidance on how verbal and written complaints will be handled fairly, efficiently and professionally.

How to make a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about the service you have received, please contact the SpaMedica hospital manager on 0161 838 0883. You can also write to us at the address provided on the back page of this booklet.

Care Quality Commission

If you're still not satisfied, you can contact the Care Quality Commission. You have the right to report any dissatisfaction or concerns to the Care Quality Commission, which is the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England.

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence

Citygate, Gallowgate
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 4PA
Tel: 03000 616161
Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Patient feedback

We welcome all of your comments. Please write to us at the address provided overleaf or discuss with us when you are at one of our locations.

You will be given a patient survey after you have been seen by a clinician. It is useful to hear your views on the service and your comments help us to keep making it better.

If you are not happy with the service you have received, please let us know by writing to us, over the phone or in person.

How to contact us:

SpaMedica Ltd
Citygate Central
Blantyre Street
Manchester
M15 4SQ

T: 0161 838 0870
E: clinic@spamedica.co.uk
W: www.spamedica.co.uk

Please contact SpaMedica on the above phone number if you have any concerns or queries relating to your eye.

This number is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year for emergencies, and from 9am – 5pm for general enquiries.

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www.spamedica.co.uk