

BLEPHARITIS TREATMENT

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis means literally, "inflammation of the eyelids". It is usually a mild, chronic condition that often does not ever go away completely. However, the symptoms can be controlled with treatment. Some common causes of blepharitis include: genetic, sensitivity to cosmetics or skin care products, allergies, and acne rosacea. Acne rosacea is a skin condition that also can cause dilated facial vessels, enlarged pores, and adult acne.

Why treat blepharitis?

Blepharitis can cause symptoms of eye irritation, itching, redness, watering, or dryness, and can even lead to eyelid and lash malposition. Treatment is aimed at reducing these symptoms. There are oil glands on the margins of the eyelids that help to keep the tear film stable and to slow tear evaporation. When the lids are inflamed, the oil glands become plugged with debris and cannot work well. Instead of going into the tear film, the oil then spreads along the lid margin and traps more skin debris. The bacteria normally present on the skin overgrows because of the increase in debris and oil, and can cause an immune response on the eye which leads to an increase in symptoms. Treatment can intervene in this vicious cycle.

How long do I have to do the treatment?

Treatment should be performed until the symptoms are controlled to the point at which doing the treatment becomes more of a bother than the symptoms. How long a course of treatment lasts in satisfactorily controlling symptoms is highly individual. Some people have to continue the scrubs and soaks indefinitely. Most people with blepharitis will be able to either stop the soaks and scrubs or substantially decrease the frequency after about 6-8 weeks.

Lid Soaks and Scrubs

- 1. Relax with a warm, wet, terrycloth washcloth over your eyes for five minutes. Make sure to keep the cloth warm the entire time (i.e. by rewarming it for a 10 seconds in the microwave or by refreshing it with warm water).**
- 2. Place a drop of no-tears baby shampoo in the palm of your hand. Drape the same terrycloth washcloth over your opposite index finger and lather the cloth in the drop of baby shampoo.**
- 3. Gently scrub your eyelashes where they join the eyelid with the lathered cloth. The goal is to get rid of the accumulated debris at the base of the lashes. If you do this correctly, you may get some shampoo solution in your eye—if you use regular shampoo instead of no-tears baby shampoo, you will not like Dr. Gray very much at this point.**

Please do the lid soaks and scrubs twice a day. IT TAKES 6-8 WEEKS OF DOING THIS TREATMENT BEFORE YOU WILL EXPERIENCE AN EFFECT, SO DON'T GET DISCOURAGED AND GIVE UP TOO EARLY!

In addition, Dr. Gray may prescribe additional treatment:

- ___ Erythromycin or Bacitracin ointment at bedtime. Place a ¼" ribbon of ointment inside the lower lid.**
- ___ Artificial tears every two hours or as needed.**
- ___ Doxycycline, one pill twice a day for 1 month.**