

Blepharitis

Information for patients
Ophthalmology Services



WHAT IS BLEPHARITIS?

Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids. It may be associated with some skin conditions such as very dry or oily skin, dry scalp or dandruff. It results in a build up of oils, scales or crusts forming around the base of the eyelashes, which can cause redness and irritation.

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

The exact cause is not known. It tends to “flare up” and then ease off in severity. It may be associated with skin conditions such as acne rosacea, dermatitis or eczema.

IS IT HARMFUL?

Not usually. However, if left untreated, conjunctivitis, styes or meibomiam cysts may occur.

CAN IT BE CURED?

Once you have had blepharitis it is likely that you will always suffer from this condition.

CAN I STILL HAVE MY OPERATION?

No your operation will be delayed until we can clear your eyes of the inflammation.

We will provide you with treatment for 2 weeks and then bring you back to the pre-assessment clinic for a review to ensure the inflammation has been cleared.

This will not “cure” the Blepharitis, it may recur in the future, but using the lid hygiene and/or antibiotic ointment will make it safe for you to have your operation.

TREATMENT

What is used to treat it?

- ❖ A lid hygiene routine using lid wipes or baby shampoo to reduce the symptoms and make your eyes more comfortable.
- ❖ An antibiotic eye ointment may be prescribed for any bacterial infection.

How often is the treatment to be used?

- ❖ You should carry out lid hygiene every morning and evening after washing your face. Continue to do this for at least 6 weeks. We recommend continuing with lid hygiene at least twice a week indefinitely to help prevent recurrence.

Why use lid wipes/baby shampoo?

- ❖ The wipes contain a “soapy” solution that is very mild, as is the shampoo – neither should sting your eyes. A soapy solution is needed to break down any oily secretions and remove the crusting formed around the root of the eyelashes.

LID HYGIENE EXPLAINED

Hand/Face Washing

Before you start, please wash your face and hands, paying particular attention to your fingernails.

Moist Heat

Take a clean face cloth and moisten with hot water (*as hot as you can handle safely*). Wring out cloth and hold it over your eyes allowing the steam to soothe and soften any debris on your lids. You may need to repeat this a couple of times.

Lid Massage

After applying the moist heat, firmly massage your upper eyelid down towards your lashes using one finger. Repeat on the lower lid massaging upwards towards the lashes. Do this for about half a minute on each eyelid.

Lid Hygiene – Using Lid Wipes/Fragrance free baby wipes

(As very few chemists stock lid wipes, use fragrance free baby wipes as an alternative where lid wipes are not available)

First remove a lid wipe from the box and when ready remove the wipe from its packet. Rub the wipe between your fingers (*this creates a foam*), and wrap the wipe around your finger. Gently close one eye and wipe across both lids of this eye, from the inside corner to the outside. Open the eye and look upwards, gently clean the lower lid along the lid margin at the root of the eyelashes, then look downwards and repeat for the top lid. Wash your hands when you have finished cleaning each eye.

Repeat the whole process for the opposite eye.

Lid Hygiene – Using Baby Shampoo

As an alternative to using Lid Wipes, mix approximately half a teaspoon of baby shampoo into a small cup and half fill with previously boiled, cooled water. Use a cotton bud dipped in the solution, shake to remove any excess fluid, and gently clean the lid margins at the root of the eye lashes on both top and bottom eyelids, from the inside corner to the outside. Avoid the shampoo solution going into the eye. Keep a separate cup for this use only. Wash your hands and repeat the process for the opposite eye.

Application of Ointment

You should wash your hands before applying a small amount of the ointment on the tip of the finger and rubbing into both lid margins and lashes.

ADVICE

- ❖ You can expect the symptoms of redness and irritation to improve within 2 - 6 weeks of starting treatment. We recommend that you continue with lid hygiene at least twice a week to help prevent recurrence.
- ❖ If you have been listed for cataract surgery, it is important that your blepharitis is treated and cleared before your surgery. This will help to reduce the risk of infection.
- ❖ It is important to wash your face and hands before applying your ointment. You must also wash your hands between treating each eye to reduce the risk of cross infection.
- ❖ You must use a fresh lid wipe/ solution of baby shampoo each time. (*Use a separate lid wipe for each eye*).
- ❖ Until your symptoms of irritation and redness have improved, you should avoid using eye make-up.
- ❖ Keep your face cloths/towels and eye make up separate from those used by other people.
- ❖ You should use an appropriate shampoo for your hair if you have dry scalp/dandruff.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

For the purpose of your present and future medical treatment, we will record details of your care. Some use may be made of this information for research purposes and to help in the planning of health services for the future. Some information will be processed on a computer. Information about your care and treatment may also be viewed by inspectors authorised by the Scottish Government. At all times great care will be taken to ensure that your information is kept confidential.

The “**Data Protection Act 1998**” gives you the right of access to any personal information which NHS Lanarkshire hold about you either in manual records or on its computers. If you wish to apply for access to your data, or if you would like more information about your rights under the Act you should, in the first instance, contact the **Health Records Manager** at the hospital.

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If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line on 08453 130 130 or e-mail info2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

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