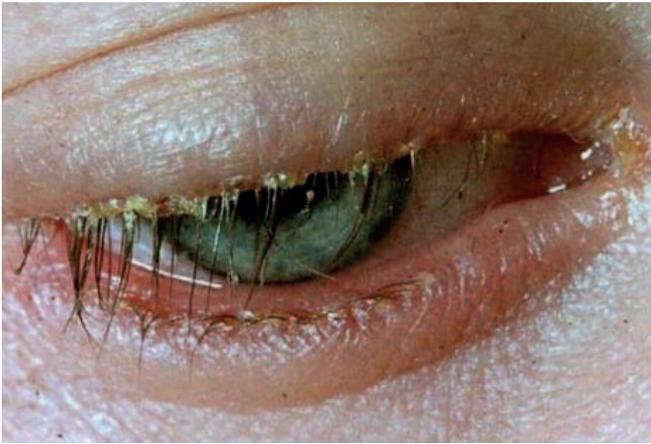


Blepharitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is an inflammatory condition that affects the eyelids and usually causes itching and irritation. The eyelids can appear red and swollen with crusty or flaky skin around the edges of the lids.



Blepharitis showing crusty and flaky skin on the eyelids

Blepharitis is not sight threatening and is often detected during a routine examination of the eyelids and eyelashes.

Once you have blepharitis it will always be present although the severity may change over time. Blepharitis is caused by inflammation of the skin and or inflammation of the meibomian glands which are found along the eyelid margin at the base of the eyelashes.

Blepharitis is not a contagious condition and cannot be transferred by using the same towel.

Blepharitis is usually a chronic condition and it can be controlled with a good eyelid hygiene regime. There are several different types of blepharitis and in some cases your eye health professional may recommend hot compresses and lid massage treatments or may prescribe medications. Your eye health professional will advise which course of action is suitable for you.

Perseverance and patience are important as it may take a few weeks before you notice the effects of any treatment.

How to control blepharitis

The key to controlling the condition is to keep your eyelids and eyelashes clean.

- Always wash your hands first
- Use cotton eye pads dipped in warm, previously boiled water
- Use each cotton eye pad once on one eye only and then discard
- Several cotton eye pads may be required for each eyelid
- Never place a used eye pad back into the cleaning solution
- Do not clean inside the eyelids
- Thoroughly cleanse the edge of the eyelids and remove any crusts, paying particular attention around the roots of the eyelashes

Various eyelid-cleaning solutions and eyelid wipes are available commercially, or you can try making one at home.

You may be advised to use sodium bicarbonate solution or diluted baby shampoo. You should prepare a fresh solution each day as follows:

Sodium bicarbonate solution

Add a quarter of a teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate to a cup of cooled boiled water and mix thoroughly.

Diluted baby shampoo

Dip the tip of a clean cotton bud into baby shampoo and mix this into half a cup of cooled boiled water.

Other medications

It is important to use all medications in the way your eye health professional tells you.

Put any eye drops into your eyes before you apply ointment to treat your blepharitis.

Apply the ointment to the outer edges of the eyelids and gently massage in to the base of the eyelashes.

You may need to take antibiotics for several weeks and you should always finish the course of tablets. If you experience any side effects, stop taking the tablets and contact your GP as soon as possible.

There is no direct connection between blepharitis and glaucoma. However, many people with glaucoma suffer from blepharitis which is why the International Glaucoma Association provides this leaflet.

Disclaimer

Whilst every step has been taken to compile accurate information and to keep it up-to-date, we cannot guarantee its correctness and completeness. The information provided in this information sheet is designed as an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, professional healthcare advice by a qualified doctor or other healthcare professional, which will be tailored to a patient's individual circumstances.

The International Glaucoma Association cannot take responsibility if patients rely solely on the information in this leaflet.



Printed: November 2016
Review date: November 2019



For more information

Please call: **01233 64 81 70** or email: info@iga.org.uk to receive free copies of:

- Glaucoma A Guide
- Glaucoma and your Relatives
- Ocular Hypertension A Guide
- Eye Drops and Dispensing Aids

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A full list of references is available on request.

Formed in 1974, the IGA has the mission to raise awareness of glaucoma, promote research related to early diagnosis and treatment and to provide support to patients and all those who care for them. Funded entirely by its members and donors (no government or statutory funding) the Association provides its services free of charge to anyone in need of assistance.

If you found this leaflet helpful and would like to support our work, please contact us on 01233 64 81 64 or visit www.glaucoma-association.com to make a donation or become a member (benefits: quarterly magazine, invitations to patient meetings, support research).

This leaflet has been provided to you free of charge thanks to the voluntary donations of our members and friends.

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