



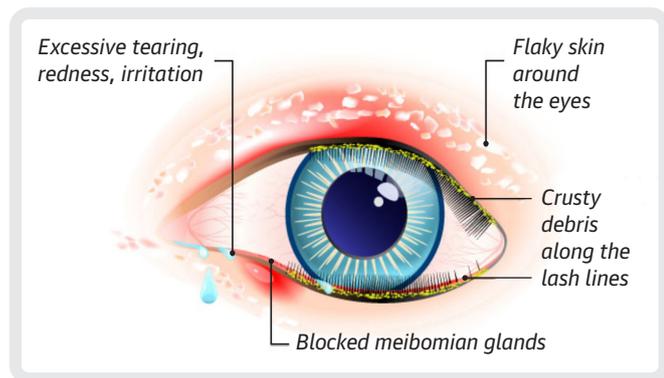
Blepharitis

What is Blepharitis?

This is a low-grade inflammation of the eyelids. Dandruff-like flakes of skin, known as debris, collect around the lashes, often attracting a bacteria called *staphylococcus*, which infects the flakes and lives deep in the eyelash glands. The normal function of the glands is to secrete a natural fatty lubricant to keep the eyes moist and comfortable. Blepharitis affects the function of the gland and reduces the lubricant in the eye. It is one of the most common causes of dry eye.

What are the symptoms of Blepharitis?

- Itchy eyelids
- Watery eyes
- Stinging sensation/dry feeling
- Crust formation on lids
- Red eyes



How is Blepharitis treated?

Blepharitis is not a serious vision-threatening condition. There are no specific cures or magic 'fixes' to fully cure it. However, it can be managed with some simple long-term home treatment. If you are using eye make-up we recommend extra care in removing it all daily.

Six ways to manage Blepharitis

1. Eyelid cleaning

You should clean your eyelids daily until blepharitis symptoms settle. Also continue to clean regularly, at least one to two times per week, to prevent reoccurrences.

Step 1: Hot compress

- Use a clean flannel in a bowl of hot (but not scalding) water with half a teaspoon of baby shampoo.
- Ring out the flannel and place it as a compress over your closed eyes for two minutes. Repeat this two or three times, rewetting the flannel as it cools.
- This will loosen the debris around your eyelashes and help to unclog and stimulate the glands.
- An alternative to a flannel is a purpose-designed eye wheat bag. These are available from SES for a small cost.



Step 2: Gentle washing/massaging

- Using warm water with baby shampoo as above, perform gentle 15 seconds-per-lid scrubs of your eyelids in the shower. Do this with a flannel draped over your index finger or by using a soaked cotton bud.
- Alternatively, use commercial preparations such as Systane lid wipes, which are available from pharmacies or as part of our SES Blepharitis starter pack.

2. Topical Medications

- You may be prescribed a gel or ointment for use at night. Maxidex and Maxitrol contain a steroid.
- These treatments may increase the risk of cataract or glaucoma so are not recommended for long-term use. You will need to be monitored by SES or an optometrist while using this treatment.
- Longer-term you may be given a gel such as Fucithalamic, Tetracycline or VitaPos. These are used along the eyelid at night just before sleep. These can be used long term, regularly or intermittently, depending on symptoms.

3. Lubricants

- Artificial teardrops are available at SES in our Blepharitis starter pack or at pharmacies and optometrists.
- Use the tears as often as needed if the eyes are uncomfortable (usually 2-4 times a day, but up to hourly if needed). The frequency should decrease as your other treatment starts to work and the eyes become more comfortable.

4. Omega 3 fatty acids

- Omega 3 fatty acids help reduce inflammation of the eyelids and can be achieved by increasing dietary intake of foods such as oily fish (e.g. salmon) or walnuts.
- Omega 3 supplements are available from health food shops.

5. Doxycycline tablets

- If the above measures are not enough a 6-12 week course of low-dose doxycycline tablets may improve the eyelid gland functioning.
- Tablets should be taken in the morning with food, as they can cause indigestion.

- If you are troubled by indigestion, you should stop taking doxycycline.
- Take extra precautions to avoid the sun, as doxycycline can sensitise you to sunburn.

6. Intense Pulsed Light

- IPL stands for Intense Pulsed Light and is a light-based technology used to treat Blepharitis and forms of dry eye. It is also commonly used for rosacea and telangiectasia (sometimes referred to as spider veins).
- With IPL technology, light pulses penetrate the tissue and create heat that targets the abnormal vessels that are the root cause of the inflammation. The body's natural reaction to the treatment removes the abnormal vessels and heals the inflammation in the skin and eyelid.
- Although many people notice an improvement in dry eye symptoms after their first or second treatment, your doctor will recommend a series of IPL treatments.
- These treatments will be performed once a month over three months, with a review 4 to 6 weeks after your last treatment. This initial treatment bundle is designed to help with long-term success in treating chronic dry eye disease and Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD).



If your Blepharitis symptoms recur or do not settle, contact Southern Eye Specialists for an appointment.

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