

BLEPHARITIS & EYELID MARGIN DISEASE

Blepharitis, also known as eyelid margin disease, is a persistent and common condition that causes inflammation of the eyelids. Patients may complain of:

- Eyelid and eye surface irritation
- Itching of the eye
- Redness of the eye
- Sensitivity to light
- Crusting of lashes on waking

With blepharitis, oily particles and bacteria accumulate near the base of the eyelashes of both the upper and lower eyelids. This may cause itchiness, irritation, redness, and burning or stinging of the eyes. This condition frequently occurs in people who have a tendency towards dry eyes, oily skin, or dandruff. The condition can be difficult to manage because it tends to recur.

CAUSES OF BLEPHARITIS

Although everyone has bacteria on the skin surface, in certain people these bacteria thrive in the skin at the base of the eyelashes. Large amounts of bacteria around the eyelashes can cause scales and particles to form along the eyelid margins and lashes.

Blepharitis also is associated with meibomianitis— dysfunction and inflammation of the nearby oil glands of the eyelids (called meibomian glands).

TREATMENT FOR BLEPHARITIS

Treatment for blepharitis involves keeping the lids clean and free of crusts. Warm compresses should be applied to the lid (five minutes, twice a day) to loosen the crusts. This is followed by a light scrubbing of the eyelid with a cotton swab or washcloth using a mixture of water and baby shampoo or commercially available “eyelid cleanser” products. Because blepharitis rarely goes away completely, most patients must maintain an eyelid hygiene routine for life. If the blepharitis is severe, an eye care professional may also prescribe antibiotics or steroid eyedrops. Lubricating eyedrops may also help relieve dryness. Patients who also have acne rosacea should have that condition treated at the same time.



With blepharitis, the eyelids become coated with oily particles and bacteria near the base of the eyelashes.