

# **BLEPHARITIS/ MEIBOMIANITIS**

## **WHAT IS BLEPHARITIS?**

Blepharitis is classified into two types:

1. **Anterior blepharitis** occurs at the outside front edge of the eyelid where the eyelashes are attached.

It is often referred to as simply **blepharitis**.

Blepharitis is often seen in people who have a tendency toward oily skin and dandruff, and it is common with advancing age. Typically the eyelids are red and somewhat swollen, and crusts may form at the base of the eyelashes. There may be a gritty or burning sensation in the eyes and excessive tearing. Blepharitis is often associated with bacterial (staphylococcal) growth. It is not contagious.

For some people, blepharitis causes only minor irritation and itching. However, it can lead to more severe signs and symptoms such as blurring of vision, missing or misdirected eyelashes, styes, chalazons, and inflammation of other eye tissue, particularly the cornea.



2. **Posterior blepharitis (meibomianitis)** affects the inner edge of the eyelid that comes in contact with the eyeball (the part of the eyelid just behind the eyelashes).

It is often referred to as **meibomianitis**.

Meibomianitis is caused by a dysfunction and inflammation of the nearby oil glands of the eyelids (called meibomian glands). This creates a favorable environment for bacterial growth. Meibomianitis is common with advancing age.

Symptoms of meibomianitis are a gritty or burning sensation in the eyes, redness and itching of the eyes, and excessive tearing.

## HOW ARE BLEPHARITIS& MEIBOMIANITIS TREATED?

Blepharitis and Meibomianitis are often chronic conditions, and tend to come back if treatment is stopped. But they can be controlled with the following:

### **Apply warm compresses twice a day.**

Wet a clean washcloth with warm water, wring it out, and place it over your closed eyelids for at least a minute. Repeat two or three times, rewetting the washcloth as it cools. This will loosen any scales and debris around the eyelashes. It will also dilute oil secretions from nearby oil (Meibomian) glands.

### **Scrub your eyelids at the base of your eyelashes.**

Scrub your eyelids with an eyelid cleansing pad, such as **OcuSoft Lid Scrubs**, which can be purchased at a drug store. (Cotton balls or Q-Tips moistened in warm water, with a little diluted baby shampoo, can be used instead.) Scrub the eyelids twice a day, immediately after applying warm compresses.

More severe cases of blepharitis or meibomianitis can be managed with warm compresses and eyelid scrubs along with medications, which include:

- **Antibiotic eyedrops and ointments** (A newer antibiotic eye drop, called **Azasite**, can be used. It is long acting and needs to be applied less frequently than other eyedrops. It also has anti-inflammatory activity.)
- **Oral antibiotics such as doxycycline**, which reduce bacterial colonization on the skin and may normalize oil-gland dysfunction (Doxycycline is commonly used to treat meibomianitis.)
- **Steroid/ Antibiotic combination** eye drops to treat both inflammation and infections (These drops are commonly used to treat acute flare-ups of anterior blepharitis.)
- **Artificial tears** to relieve dry eyes

Washing your hair, scalp and eyebrows with antibacterial shampoo can also help control anterior blepharitis.