

Blepharitis

Information for Patients



What is Blepharitis?

Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids. It is often a persistent condition with no 'one off' cure. It usually affects both eyes on the edges (margins) of the eyelids. It is not usually serious, but can become uncomfortable and irritating. Once symptoms have eased, daily 'eyelid hygiene' can usually keep the symptoms away. Eyesight is rarely affected. Blepharitis is easily transferable from person to person through using the same face towels.

What are the symptoms of Blepharitis?

- Sore eyelids. They look inflamed or greasy.
- Tiny flakes or scales appear on the eyelids. Crusts may develop at the base of eyelashes.
- The eyelids can become infected. They become sticky with a discharge. The eyelids may be stuck together in the morning.
- One or more of the tiny glands of the eyelids (meibomian glands) may block and fill with an oily fluid. The glands can also become infected which can cause a meibomian cyst, Chalazion, or damage to the eyelashes.
- Many people with Blepharitis make fewer tears than normal. This can lead to dry eyes, which can cause the eyes to feel gritty and sore.

What causes Blepharitis?

The exact cause is unknown. It can be persistent and the severity can change. If you are diagnosed with Blepharitis you are likely to have a tendency for further episodes. If your eyelids are itchy rubbing them can make the inflammation worse. This can lead to the eyelids becoming sore.

What is the treatment for Blepharitis?

There is no 'one off' cure. Symptoms can usually be eased with treatment. Severe persistent Blepharitis can occasionally lead to scarring of the eyelid.

Regular eyelid hygiene

This is most important for treatment and prevention.

- Bathe and gently press on the eyelids with a flannel soaked in pre-boiled very warm water for 5-10 minutes. This softens the skin and any crusts attached to the eyelids.
- Gently massage the eyelids. By rolling the finger on the eyelids this helps to push out any of the mucous fluid from the glands.
- Clean the eyelids.
- Ensure your hands are clean.

- Dip a cotton bud in either pre-boiled cooled water or diluted 1 teaspoon of baby shampoo to a cup of cooled boiled water. You will be advised which to use at the clinic.
- Gently scrub at the base of the eyelashes, try to clean off any crusts that may be present.
- Use a fresh cotton bud for each eye. Gently scrub upper and lower eyelids.
- Gently wipe the eyelid dry with clean flannel or tissue.

You should do the above routine at least twice a day until the symptoms settle. You will be advised to return to the clinic for review if necessary. When the symptoms have gone, you should keep doing this routine once every day to prevent further flare up.

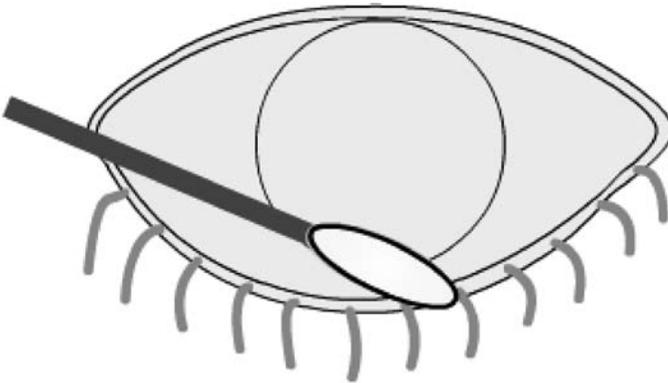


Diagram showing eyelid cleaning

Other treatments

Antibiotic eye ointments or drops may be prescribed if the eyelid becomes infected. The ointment must be instilled after you have carried out the eyelid hygiene. You may need a course for up to one month or until the inflammation has completely gone. If you are to have an eye operation this may be postponed until the inflammation is cleared.

Rarely antibiotic tablets are needed if the antibiotic drops or ointment do not clear the infection.

Artificial tear eye drops

These will help if you develop dry eyes.

Treating associated conditions

A condition called Seborrhoeic Dermatitis is associated with Blepharitis. This is a skin condition, which is caused by the overgrowth of yeast in the skin. This can cause dandruff and sometimes a rash commonly on the face or upper body. It can usually be treated with an anti-yeast shampoo. Therefore treating this condition can improve the Blepharitis too.

Other skin conditions of the face such as eczema and rosacea may also make Blepharitis worse. If you have these other conditions, if possible treatment may also help ease the Blepharitis.

Advice given in clinic

Clean your eyelids _____ times per day

Your Blepharitis check in clinic is _____

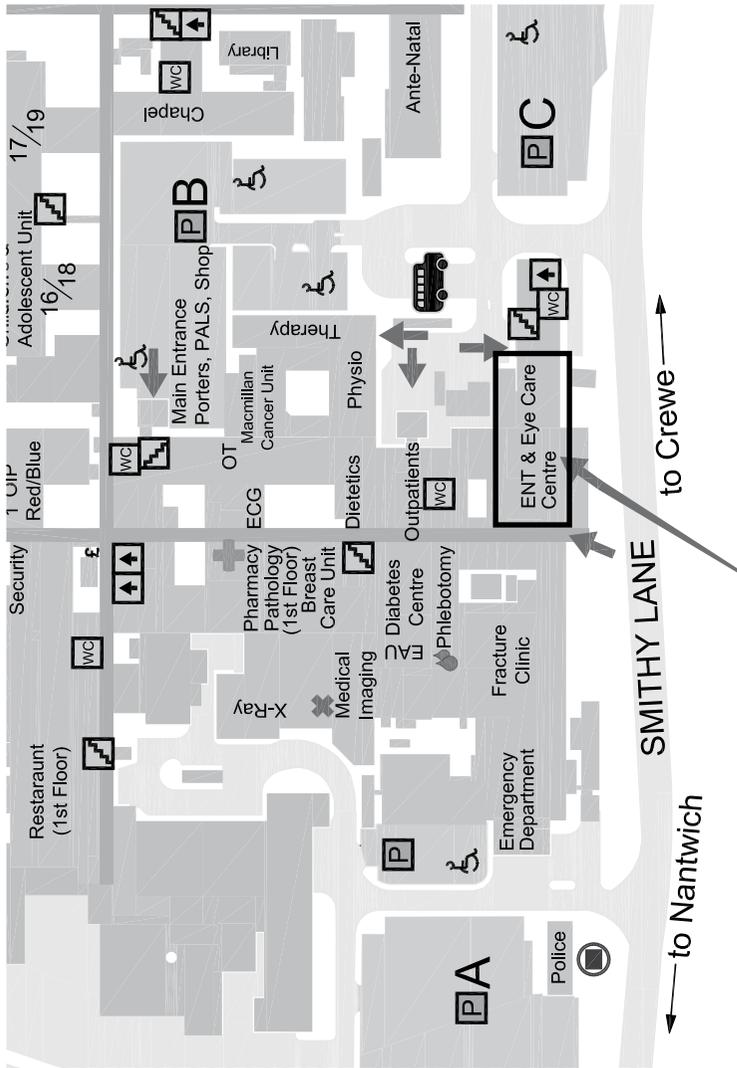
Contact the Eye Care Centre on **01270 255141 and ask for bleep 2080** between 2.00pm and 4.30 pm where a member of the clinic team will answer any queries you may have about the condition, your regime or this leaflet.

Further information can be found on the website:

www.cks.nhs.uk/blepharitis

This leaflet is available in audio, braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy please telephone 01270 273104

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