

BLEPHARITIS

Blepharitis is a common condition that causes inflammation of the eyelids. There are a number of causes of blepharitis, such as clogged oil (meibomian) glands along the edge of the eyelid, bacteria (Staphylococcus), dandruff, and rosacea. Inflammation of the oil glands can also result in a **chalazion** or stye, which appears as a lump of the eyelid.

Symptoms of blepharitis include a burning or scratchy sensation, excessive tearing, sensitivity to light (photophobia), red and swollen eyelids, redness of the eye, blurred vision, frothy tears, dry eye, or crusting of the eyelashes on awakening.

Treatment of blepharitis requires warm compresses to help loosen the crusts and melt the clogged oil trapped in the glands as well as gentle scrubbing of the edge of the eyelid with non-irritating baby shampoo to help clean away the debris and bacteria.

Treatment Procedure:

Warm Compresses

- Place **dry, uncooked rice** in a **clean cotton sock** in order to create a sack about the size of your fist
- Tie a **knot** in the end of the sock and heat in a **microwave oven** for about 1 minute (being careful *not* to get it so hot as to scald the skin or burn the rice)
- **Place** the warm sack up to your **closed eye** for **5-10 minutes**. The rice should retain its heat for that period of time
- Alternatively, **warm** a *clean cloth wash towel* with hot tap water (being careful *not* to get it so hot as to scald the skin). Face downwards, and **place** the warmed towel up to your **closed eyes**, so that the moist heat rises to your eyelids. **Re-warm** the towel every few minutes, so that the towel is placed to the eyes for at least **5-10 minutes** of warmth.

Lid Scrubs

- Place a few drops of **non-irritating baby shampoo** (Johnson and Johnson's No More Tears® works well, or a commercial eye scrub) on a soft washcloth and squeeze a few times to produce a lather
- With the eyes *closed*, **scrub** along the edges of the eyelashes
- **Rinse** the eyelids free of shampoo
- Alternatively, a cotton swab (such as Q-Tip®) may be dampened in diluted non-irritating baby shampoo, and used to scrub the edges of the eyelids. Be careful to avoid touching the eye with the cotton swab.

Typically, the warm compresses should be performed twice a day and the lid scrubs twice a week.

Artificial tears (Refresh Tears, Gentile Drops, Systane) 4 times a day can help to relieve burning, irritation, and dryness symptoms.

Omega-3 fatty acid supplements (in the form of **fish oil** 2-4mg/day and **flax seed oil** 4-6mg/day taken orally may also help as well as switching to a **tee tree oil shampoo** for washing your hair.