

Blepharitis

- Blepharitis is inflammation of the edges of the eyelids. It usually affects both eyes and may be difficult to get rid of completely. Blepharitis is associated with crusting of the eyelashes and excess oily secretions from glands that open onto the eyelid margins (edges). Your eyes feel gritty and sore, and in severe cases the eyelid margins are red and crusty. The condition is often associated with dryness of the eyes and eyelid cysts.
- First, place a warm flannel on your closed eyelids for 2–3 minutes to heat up and therefore loosen excess oily secretions on the lid margins.
- Add a few drops of baby shampoo to a cup of cooled, boiled water. Dip a cotton-wool bud or cotton ball into the water and gently but firmly scrub along the edges of your eyelids to remove any crusts, debris and excess oily secretions. This should not sting or damage your eyes. Clean along the eyelid edges from the inner corner of the eye outwards.
- The eyelids need to be cleaned at least once a day (especially in the morning) to produce an improvement. Often, the inflammation returns when treatment is stopped, so eyelid hygiene may need to continue indefinitely. Pharmacies now provide 'lid care' packs with pre-prepared solutions and gauze swabs that make it easier to bathe the lids if time is limited first thing in the morning.
- If blepharitis is severe, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics or steroid eye drops or ointment. Sometimes a prolonged course of tetracycline antibiotic tablets may also help.
- Blepharitis is usually associated with dry eyes, so artificial tears are also helpful.

