



DRY EYES & BLEPHARITIS
PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



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A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair and blue eyes. She is looking upwards and to the right. Her right hand is holding a white plastic eye drop bottle, with the tip of the applicator just above her eye. Her left hand is gently touching her cheek. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall lighting is soft and natural.

DRY EYES & BLEPHARITIS





WHAT IS DRY EYES?

On the front surface of your eye, you have a tear film. The tear film has three layers; the mucus, aqueous and lipid layer which keep your eyes moist, protect the eye and help you see clearly.

If this tear film is not smooth your eyes may feel a burning, gritty or itchy sensation or a feeling of something in the eye, like an eyelash.

Your eyes may also get light sensitive and watery, and it can make your vision blurry.

WHY DO WE GET DRY EYES?

Dry eyes happen when your eyes don't make enough tears for the tear film to be smooth, or the tears made are of poor quality and don't stay in the eyes long enough.

Some causes of dry eye include:

Age: As you get older, your eyes naturally produce fewer tears. This is common in people over 50.

Medications: Certain medicines can reduce tear production.

These include antihistamines, decongestants, blood pressure medications, and antidepressants.

Medical Conditions: Some health problems, like arthritis, diabetes, and thyroid issues, can lead to dry eyes. Issues that prevent your eyelids from closing properly can cause your tears to evaporate too quickly.

Hormonal changes, especially in women during pregnancy, menopause, or while using birth control pills, can also affect tear production.

Environmental Factors: Being in dry, windy, or smoky environments can make your tears evaporate more quickly.

Air conditioning and heating can also dry out the air, affecting your eyes.

Screen Time: Staring at screens (computers, phones, TVs) for long periods reduces how often you blink. Blinking less means your eyes are not getting refreshed with new tears as often, leading to dryness.

Contact Lenses: Wearing contact lenses for extended periods can contribute to dry eyes.

HOW TO HELP DRY EYES

- 1. Artificial Tears:** These are eye drops that add moisture to your eyes. It is recommended to use the preservative free versions if used long term.
- 2. Take Breaks:** If you're reading or using a screen, take breaks to blink more often. The 20, 20, 20 rule is a good guide to follow, it suggests taking a break of at least 20 seconds, every 20 minutes and to look at least 20 feet away.

3. **Humidifier:** Using a humidifier adds moisture to the air, which can help your eyes.
4. **Avoid:** Air conditioning, fans or heating can dry the eyes, avoid them blowing directly into the eyes and wear protective eyewear when it is windy outside.
5. **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to help keep your eyes moist and limit the amount of caffeine consumed as this can be dehydrating.
6. **Supplements:** Taking Omega-3, Flaxseed or eating oily fish has shown to improve dry eyes. It is important to check with your eye specialist or doctor before starting new supplements as they can have adverse side effects especially if you are taking other medications.

BLEPHARITIS

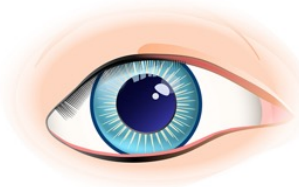
Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids, particularly at the edge of the eyelashes, and it can contribute to dry eye symptoms.

Blepharitis usually affects both eyes and can cause redness, swelling, and irritation of the eyelids.

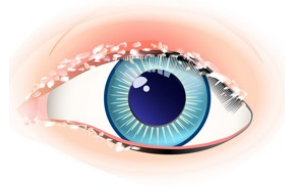
TYPES OF BLEPHARITIS

Anterior blepharitis affects the outside edge of your eyelid and is usually caused by a build-up of bacteria called staphylococcus.

Normal



Blepharitis



It can cause itching of the eyelids and maybe described as the appearance of crusting or dandruff on the root of your lashes.

Posterior blepharitis affects the inside edge of your eyelid and is also called Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD).

This is where the tiny oil glands in your eyelids, called meibomian glands, don't work properly and the opening of the gland gets clogged.

These glands are important because they produce the oily layer of your tear film, which helps keep your eyes moist and comfortable.

Without enough oil, your tears can evaporate too quickly, leading to dry eyes.

Mixed blepharitis is a combination of both anterior and posterior blepharitis.

Blepharitis is a chronic condition so requires long term management.

It is not usually serious or contagious but if left untreated can lead to other problems such as styes, ulcers and conjunctivitis.

TREATMENT

Warm compresses

1. Heat an eye bag or a flannel / cloth soaked in warm water. Place over the eyes closed for 5-10 minutes. If the flannel or bag cools it should be reheated and replaced onto the closed lids for the full duration of time.
2. Using a clean finger gently massage your top eyelid in circles then towards to direction of the root of your lashes. Repeat this process with the bottom lid.

This helps to unclog the blocked glands and release the oils. It is advisable to repeat this process daily. Eye bags are easier to direct the heat and are more effective.

Lid hygiene

There are many commercial products available which are specifically designed to use on the eyelids such as blephasol solution or wipes.

It is advisable to clean the root of the lashes on the top and bottom lids daily. Always use a new wipe or pad each time.

If your symptoms persist or worsen it is important to visit your eye specialist as they may be able to offer further treatment.

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