

# **Blepharitis and Meibomian Gland Disease and 101 Conventional and Unconventional Treatments**

## **Introduction**

Blepharitis is inflammation of the eyelid margins. It is a very common condition that can cause them to be red, sore, dry and/or gritty and sometimes with flakes or crusts on them or associated with the development of styes (chalazions, Meibomian cysts).

## **Types of Blepharitis**

Blepharitis is a general term for inflammation of the eyelid margin but it can be divided into two main types:

- 1) Anterior blepharitis: small dandruff like flakes develop at the bases of the eyelashes and can either be caused by, or be a cause of irritation of the eyelids.
- 2) Posterior blepharitis (Meibomian gland disease): each eyelid contains around 25 meibomian glands that release the oil that is an important part of our tears. In posterior blepharitis this oil does not flow freely and can accumulate in the gland openings or on the eyelid margin causing irritation and inflammation. The thickened oil can also block the glands causing styes (chalazions, Meibomian cysts)

## **The Cause of Blepharitis**

Although blepharitis is very common the cause is not well understood. It is probably a complex condition with lots of contributing factors, such as a reaction to normal bacteria or fungi on the eyelid margin and a change in consistency or composition of the Meibomian gland oil. It is more common in people with some conditions such as eczema, acne and rosacea. Some people report that they start to develop blepharitis after lifestyle changes such as changes to their diet or their exercise routine and others report it with other life changes such as pregnancy and stress.

## Complications

Blepharitis is normally a mild condition that causes troublesome symptoms but no damage to the eyes. Very occasionally severe blepharitis can cause eye problems, for example clouding of the surface of the eye and eyelid scarring that causes the eyelashes to turn inwards. These severe cases must be intensively managed by a specialist.

## Treatment

Numerous different treatments are described for blepharitis. Some are conventional and others are very unconventional. As this is a complex condition which is probably different in different people it is worth trying lots of different treatments until you find one that is effective. The list below are all reported somewhere either in medical journals, or just on internet forums. I cannot tell you which work, and some may even make it worse, but it is worth considering them. **I have not been selective in recording these and have simply noted down all the treatments I have come across however bizarre these sound, although I have put the more conventional and recognized ones in bold and please note that you try all of these treatments at your own risk!**

### Washes and topical

- **Hot compress: massage the eyelids for several minutes twice daily with a hot flannel or make-up remover pad. The massage helps to express the Meibomian glands and the heat helps to make the thickened oil more fluid.**
  - Apparently a stainless steel butter warmer can be useful to keep the cloth warm!
  - Add Himalayan salt and lemon to the hot compress
- **Clean base of eyelashes using diluted tea tree shampoo or bowl of warm water with a tea spoon of bicarbonate of soda:**

- **Add 1/8<sup>th</sup> - 1/4 of a teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate (or baby shampoo, although this may irritate some peoples eyelids) to a cup of cold boiled water and mix thoroughly and store in the fridge for up to one week.**
- **Twice daily use a cotton bud dipped in the bicarbonate mix to vigorously scrub the base of the eyelashes.**
- **Clearadex solution: this kills the demodex mite which may cause blepharitis in some people.**
- Application of honey onto affected lid(s)
- Application of honey mixed with turmeric onto affected lid(s)
- Applying petroleum jelly to eyelids (to suffocate mites)
- Opening and applying fish oil capsules directly to the eyelids before sleep (NB foul smell)
- Applying potato slices onto affected eye for 20 mins
- Applying organic coconut oil
- Preparing and applying saline and activated charcoal powder eye drops
- Apple cider vinegar eye bath: mix 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar in one large bowl of warm water. Put the side of face in the water bowl to keep breathing through the corner of the mouth. Submerge the eye eye, blink while looking in different directions to cover all areas. Swap sides. Do this for 10 seconds.

### Systemic Disease Treatment

- **Treating underlying causes i.e. rosacea or seborrheic dermatitis**

### Medications

- **Antibiotic therapy**
  - **Topical**
  - **Systemic, e.g. doxycycline**
- **Steroid therapy**
- **Long term use of anti-acne meds**
- **Ketaconazole 2% cream**

## **Dietary**

- **Diet high in omega 3 or omega 3 capsules**
- Candida diet (avoiding sugary foods, yeast, wheat, alcohol, cheese and meat that has been treated with antibiotics)
- Avoid bananas
- Increase daily water intake
- Increase onion, garlic and ginger.

## Mechanical

- Eye lid massage
- Blinking exercises
- Meibomian duct probing
- **BlephEx treatment: <http://www.blephexlids.co.uk/>**
- Lipiflow treatment: <http://tearscience.com/en/the-tearscience-system/treatment/>
- Blepharoscrob

## **Other**

- Pulsed light treatment
- Regular saunas
- Exercise (although other reports of it developing with exercise!)

## **Contact Details**

**Info@SaulRajak.com**

**Tel: 07847 462030**

**www.saulrajak.com**