

What Is Blepharitis?

Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids. The membrane covering the inside of the eyelid and the white of the eye may also become inflamed. Blepharitis can be caused by **bacteria** (germs) on the eyelids or on the skin around the eyes. Dandruff or oily skin can also cause blepharitis. Wearing contact lenses or makeup can make the symptoms worse. Blepharitis can't always be cured. But it can be controlled.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

Oil and bacteria coat the eyelids near the base of the eyelashes. You may then have:

- Redness of the eyelids
- Swelling and tenderness of the eyelids
- Itching around the eyelashes
- Greasy flakes or scales around the eyelashes
- Hard crusts at the base of the eyelashes. These crusts may cause the eyelashes to fall out.

Flakes or crusts can form during the night. If this happens, it may be hard for you to open your eyes in the morning. If blepharitis is not treated promptly, it can lead to a cyst (an inflammation of an oil gland on the eyelid) or a sty (an infection at the base of an eyelash).

Tips for Prevention

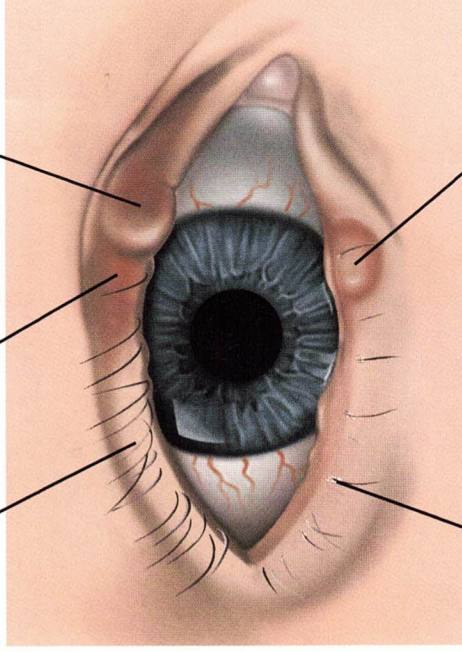
To help keep your eyes from becoming inflamed:

- Wash your hands well with soap and warm water before touching your eyes.
- Wash your hair often.



- Keep contact lenses and lens solutions clean.
- Don't wear eye makeup while your eyes are inflamed. And buy new eye makeup often.

Eyelid
Redness and swelling appear on the eyelids.
Cyst (chalazion)



Stye
Flakes or crusts may form at the base of the eyelashes.

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Treating Blepharitis

Your eye doctor can most often diagnose blepharitis by checking your eyelids closely. To treat the problem, you need to keep your eyelids clean. Your eye doctor may also give you medication.

Self-Care

Warm compresses help reduce redness and swelling and keep the eyelids clean. You may also need to clean your eyelids when you wake up.

To apply a warm compress:

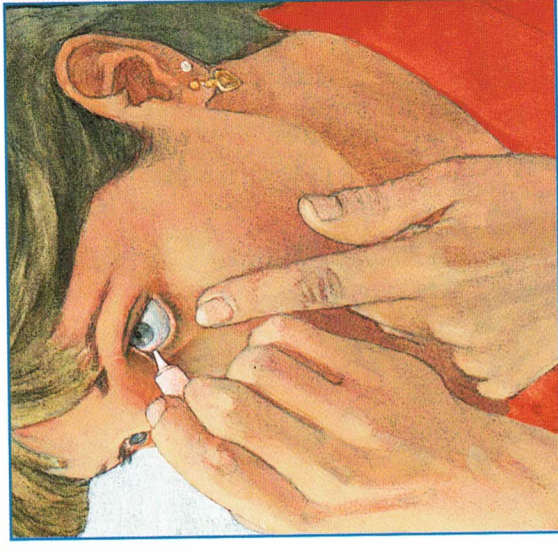
1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
2. Wet a clean washcloth with warm water. Then wring it out.
3. Close your eyes and place the washcloth over your eyelids for 3 to 5 minutes. This helps loosen scales or crusts.
4. Wet the washcloth again as often as needed to keep it warm.

Repeat 2 or more times a day. Use a clean washcloth each time.



To use an eyelid scrub:

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
2. Use a ready-made eyelid scrub.
Or, mix 3 drops of baby shampoo in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of warm water.
3. Dip a lint-free pad, cotton swab, or clean washcloth in the scrub.
4. Close one eye and scrub the base of the eyelid.
5. Rinse the lid in cool water and dry with a clean towel.
6. Repeat on the other eye.



Medication

Your eye doctor may prescribe eye drops or ointment to help relieve redness, swelling, and irritation. When applying ointment or drops, make sure that the tip of the tube or bottle doesn't touch your eyelid. Oral antibiotics, or antibiotic ointment or drops with cortisone may also be prescribed. These help clear up a bacterial infection, a cyst, or a sty on the eyelid. Even if you are prescribed medication, you still need to use warm compresses and eyelid scrubs.