

Blepharoconjunctivitis

This material will help you understand blepharoconjunctivitis and how you can manage it.

What is blepharoconjunctivitis?

Blepharoconjunctivitis is the combining of a severe case of blepharitis and conjunctivitis. Blepharitis is an irritation and inflammation of the eyelids. Conjunctivitis is an irritation and inflammation of the conjunctiva. The conjunctiva is the thin layer that covers the white of the eye and the inner surface of the eyelids.

What causes blepharoconjunctivitis?

Blepharoconjunctivitis occurs when normal bacteria that live on the eyelid skin cause irritation and inflammation to your eyelids. The irritation and inflammation also spreads to the conjunctiva. The type of irritation and inflammation in the eyelids is similar to what happens in acne or rosacea.

People with blepharoconjunctivitis may experience some of these common symptoms:

- Burning, irritated or itchy eyes
- Redness of the eyelids or eye
- Scaly, dry skin on the eyelids
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How is blepharoconjunctivitis treated?

Blepharoconjunctivitis is treated by removing the source of the irritation:

1. Wash the eyelashes to remove any dandruff particles.

You can buy eyelid scrubs over the counter at the pharmacy or grocery store. You can also buy “no more tears” baby shampoo to make your own lid scrubs.

Put three drops of the baby shampoo into a glass with 3 ounces of warm water (about ½ a cup).

Take a clean washcloth and moisten it in your soapy solution. Gently wash your eyelashes with the washcloth. Close your eyes softly, as if you were sleeping, while you are washing the lashes. Make a new round of soapy water each time you wash your lashes.

2. Use a warm compress.

To “melt” the backed up oil in the eyelid margin, use a warm compress at least once a day. (Your doctor may recommend using it more often.) A warm compress is a clean washcloth that you heat under the hottest water that feels comfortable on your skin. Wring the washcloth out after you get it wet. Leave this compress on your eyes for 5 minutes. You may need to re-heat the washcloth to keep it warm for the full 5 minutes.

If you are just starting to treat your blepharoconjunctivitis, follow the steps above when you wake up and before you go to bed. Do this for two weeks. After the two weeks, do this only in the morning. If you stop doing this, the blepharoconjunctivitis may start to bother you again. Since it is like dandruff, it will never really go away. It gets better and worse but it never goes away completely.

Often times, after doing this routine in the morning you will feel like there is something in your eye. This is the oil being released from the glands and coating the surface of the eye. This is good for you. To rinse out the eye, use an artificial tear at the end of the routine. This moisturizes the eye even more. You can also use artificial tears 4-6 times a day if the eye feels tired or irritated.

If this does not control your blepharitis, your eye doctor might also recommend a prescription medication to be applied to the eyelids or to be taken orally.

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Author: Shayla Wilson, MPH candidate

Reviewers: Gale Oren, MILS and Paula Anne Newman-Casey, MD, MS

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