

Blepharitis is a condition where the edges of the eyelids become inflamed (red and swollen).

It is a common condition, accounting for an estimated 1 in 20 eye problems. Blepharitis can develop at any age, but is more common in people over 40.

Signs of blepharitis can include:

- itchy and sore eyelids
- eyelids that stick together and are difficult to open
- eyelashes that become crusty or greasy

Blepharitis can be caused

- by an infection with bacteria
- seborrhoeic dermatitis – (oily or flaky skin)
- rosacea – (red and blotchy skin)

Blepharitis is not contagious.

Blepharitis is usually a long-term condition.

Most people experience repeated episodes, separated by periods without symptoms.

Blepharitis cannot usually be cured, but a daily eyelid-cleaning routine that involves applying a warm compress – gently massaging your eyelids and wiping away any crusts – can help control the symptoms.

Sometimes antibiotics and mild steroids are needed to treat these. They should be taken only with consultation with an ophthalmologist. More severe cases may require oral antibiotics.

Shampooing the eyelids

Taking a mild baby shampoo and shampooing the eyelid margins once or twice a week may be helpful. Take care not to let any shampoo get in the eye itself and just shampoo the eyelashes. Remove any crusts if you can.

Warm compresses

Take a warm flannel and apply it to the lids affected for a few minutes. The flannel should be warm and comfortable. Do not apply a hot flannel to the eyelids. Massage the eyelids as you keep the warm flannel on the eye. This will help the oily secretions and oily tears to flow much better.