

Eyelid Hygiene

Why do I need to carry out eyelid hygiene?

You may have one of the following conditions:

- Blepharitis
- Hordeolum
- Stye
- Marginal Keratitis
- Ocular Rosacea
- Conjunctivitis

What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a common inflammatory condition of the eyelids edges. It can be linked with some skin conditions such as very oily or very flaky skin. It can also cause some of the other problems on the list above if it is left untreated.

What might it look and feel like?

- Redness of the edges of the eyelid.
- Burning, soreness and itching of the eyes.
- Foreign body sensation (or feeling of something in the eye).
- White, tiny scales sticking of the roots of eyelashes (seen with magnification).
- Blockage of the microscopic oily eyelid glands (seen with magnification).

What is the treatment?

You can help relieve the irritation and control the problem by special cleaning of the eyelid edges and lashes. You should follow the instructions below in this order:

1. Hot compress

Hold a clean flannel moistened in comfortably hot water against the closed eyelids for 5 minutes. (You will need to keep reheating it when it cools during that time). This helps melt the oils in the blocked glands.

2. Lid massage

Using a clean finger or cotton bud firmly stroke the skin of the eyelids towards the eyelashes. This will mean you stoke downwards for massaging the top eyelid and upwards for the bottom eyelid. This is to help move the oils in the glands and help unblock them.

3. Cleaning

Clean away any crusts and oils in the lashes and edge of the eyelids using a fresh cotton bud dipped in an egg-cup of warm pre-boiled water which has been mixed with a quarter teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate.

Dos and Don'ts

Do use a bud tip only once.

Do use several bud tips per eye.

Don't dip a used bud back in the cleaning solution.

Then rinse the eyelids with clean water and dry gently with a clean towel.

For how long will I need to keep doing this?

This tends to be a long term condition and Eyelid Hygiene treatment needs to be carried out twice-daily for at least 2 weeks. You may find that you are able to reduce how often it needs to be carried out, stop or tailor it to your symptoms.

Many people find that the problem can only be kept at bay with continued Eyelid Hygiene and therefore you should restart if your symptoms keep coming back.

Can I buy a ready-made Eyelid cleaner?

Yes there are a few different brands of eyelid wipes available but mixing your own is better for avoiding a reaction to the chemicals in the commercially available wipes.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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