

BLEPHARITIS AND DRY EYES

Blepharitis and Dry Eye often coexist. Blepharitis involves inflammation of the inner eyelid or the eyelid's edge due to an excess of lid oils, which accumulate and become inflamed. In many cases, the meibomian oil glands in the eyelid become blocked, leading to fat buildup and inflammation.

The most effective way to manage this condition is by applying heat to the eyelids, which helps melt the oils and allows them to flow through the gland pores for removal. Ideally, this should be done once or twice daily. You can achieve this by using a warm compress, a heated rice pack available at the pharmacy, or even a hard-boiled egg in its shell. Keep the heat on the eye for ten to fifteen minutes in the morning and evening, applying gentle pressure to ensure the oil in the eyelid glands melts.

Supportive treatment involves eyelid cleaning, which can be accomplished with products like Systane Lid wipes or Lid-Care sachets, available at the pharmacy. These contain gentle detergents to clean the eyelashes, but avoid getting the solution into your eyes. Alternatively, you can use a cotton bud dipped in warm water to brush the lashes and reduce the buildup of lash oils.

Typically, it is advisable to combine the above two treatments and perform them twice daily when your eyes are bothering you.

Additional therapy includes using non-preserved lubricating eye drops like Cellufresh to keep your eyes moist. Sometimes, thicker products like Viscotears, Polygel or Genteal Gel can be used. Generally, non-preserved tear supplements are better for alleviating eye irritation, and your pharmacist can advise you on which one to use.

Other supportive measures include wearing sunglasses to shield your eyes from wind and evaporative air. Most of our tears are lost through evaporation, so anything that reduces this can enhance eye comfort. Sunglasses or regular glasses can be helpful.

For individuals who spend extended periods on computers or reading, the problem of evaporation is more pronounced. Concentration often leads to reduced blinking, resulting in tear evaporation and discomfort. This is known as Digital Eye Syndrome, and patients may experience redness, soreness, and grittiness in the afternoon.

Treatment for Digital Eye Syndrome includes lubrication, managing Blepharitis as previously mentioned, and taking brief eye breaks at least once an hour. These breaks can involve stepping away from the computer or looking out the window to rest the eye muscles. Unfortunately, there is no cure for Digital Eye Syndrome, and the best approach is to use your eyes less and provide them with ample rest.



In persistent cases, topical steroid drops may be prescribed by a doctor, but they should only be used, when necessary, as they can lead to glaucoma and cataracts.

Regrettably, Blepharitis and Dry Eye cannot be completely cured; they are part of the aging process. The goal is to manage and control them to have more good days than bad. Most people experience these conditions mildly, but they can certainly be bothersome when they flare up.

Please contact us directly on 02 9635 0663 for general queries - for any urgent or After-hours Emergencies please contact Sydney Eye Hospital 9382 7111 and speak to the eye registrar.