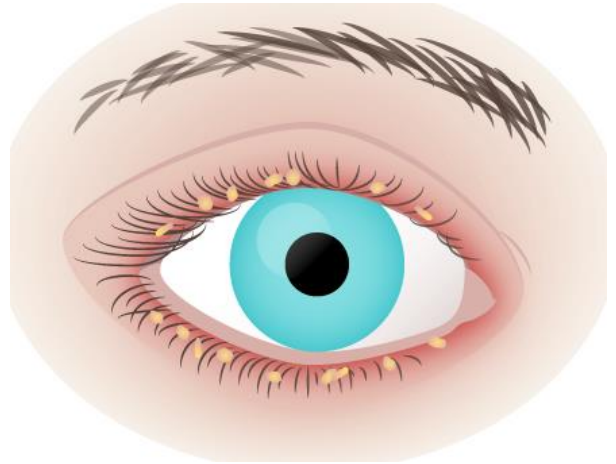


# Blepharitis

## What is blepharitis?

Blepharitis is caused by bacteria producing oily flaky material at the base of your eyelashes. This material blocks glands that lubricate the eye and the eye can become dry. You may feel a gritty, sandy or burning sensation. A collection of the oily material may also accumulate in the eyelid, called a sty or chalazion.



## How is blepharitis treated?

While there is no cure for blepharitis, there are a number of things you can do to control the symptoms. Treatments include:

- 1. Eyelid massage / warm compress:** wet a clean cotton hand towel with hot water. Let it cool down and squeeze out the excess water. Place the towel over your closed eyes for at least 3 minutes and gently massage at the base of your eyelashes with your fingertips. This will loosen the flakes sticking to the eyelashes and help express a sty or hordeolum. Perform this once or twice daily.
- 2. Eyelid hygiene:** wet a clean cotton hand towel or cotton swab (Q-tip) in hot water. Let it cool down and gently wipe the base of your eyelashes for about 20 seconds. Alternatively, you can wet the towel or cotton swab in a watered down solution of *Johnsons Baby Shampoo* (5 drops of shampoo in half a cup of boiled water) or bicarbonate of soda (1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in half a litre of boiled water). Alternately use *Blephadex* eyelid wipes. Perform this once or twice daily.
- 3. Lubricating drops:** a preservative free lubricating eye drop can be applied as often as required, this may be every hour. Examples of these drops include: *Systane*, *Bion Tears* or *Cellufresh*. These come in multiple small droplet containers and do not contain toxic preservatives. If the blepharitis and dry eye is severe then a lubricating ointment can be applied at night before sleep. Examples of these ointments include: *Poly Visc*, *Poly Gel* or *Celluvisc*.
- 4. Other medications:** If your blepharitis is severe you can consume flaxseed oil capsules, 1 or 2 each morning. Your doctor may also prescribe an antibiotic.

## How long does blepharitis last for?

Blepharitis is an ongoing condition and your symptoms can take up to 2-3 months to improve using these treatments. If your symptoms worsen or do not improve then please consult your doctor.

**Further reading:** <https://ranzco.edu/ophthalmology-and-eye-health/eye-conditions>