

What Is Blepharitis?

Leer en Español: [¿Qué es la blefaritis?](#)

Written By: [Kierstan Boyd](#)

Reviewed By: [Odalys Mendoza MD](#)

May. 14, 2020

Blepharitis is [inflammation](#) of the [eyelids](#). They may appear red, [swollen](#), or feel like they are [burning](#) or sore. You may have flakes or oily particles (crusts) wrapped at the base of your eyelashes too. Blepharitis is very common, especially among people who have oily skin, dandruff or [rosacea](#).

What Causes Blepharitis?

Everyone has some bacteria on their skin. Some people, however, have more bacteria at the base of their eyelashes than other people. This can cause dandruff-like flakes to form. Also, some people have problems with oil glands in their eyelids, leading to blepharitis.

Blepharitis Treatment

Unfortunately there is not a cure for blepharitis, but there are a number of things you can do to help control the symptoms. Treatments include:

Warm compresses

Wet a clean washcloth with warm water and wring it out until somewhat dry. Place the washcloth over your closed eyes for at least 1 minute. Wet the washcloth as often as needed so it stays warm. This will help loosen the flakes sticking around your eyelashes. It also helps keep nearby oil glands from clogging.

There's also an electronic device that uses heat and massage to unclog the oil glands in your eyelids. The treatments are done in the office by your ophthalmologist.

Eyelid scrubs

Soak a clean washcloth, cotton swab (Q-tip) applicator, or lint-free pad in baby shampoo diluted in warm water. Then use it to gently scrub the base of your eyelashes. Scrub for about 15 seconds.

Antibiotics

Your ophthalmologist may have you use an antibiotic ointment on your eyes. Put a small amount of ointment on a clean fingertip or a cotton swab (Q-tip). Gently apply the ointment to the base of your eyelashes. Do this just before bedtime, or as your doctor recommends. Your doctor might also prescribe an antibiotic medicine for you to take by mouth.

Eye drops

Artificial tears or steroid [eye drops](#) may reduce redness, [swelling](#) and [dry eye](#). Your ophthalmologist might prescribe an antibiotic eye drop to help the oil glands work better.

Skin and eyelid hygiene

It is very important to keep your [eyelids](#), skin and hair clean. This keeps your blepharitis symptoms under control. Carefully wash your eyelashes every day with baby shampoo diluted in warm water. Also, wash your hair, scalp and eyebrows with an antibacterial shampoo. There are some new antiseptic sprays you can use on the skin that keep bacteria from growing too much.

Source: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-blepharitis>