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BLEPHARITIS & EYELID MARGIN DISEASE

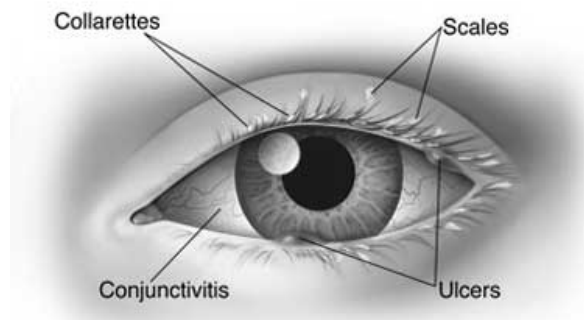
Blepharitis is a common, recurrent, and persistent inflammatory disease of the eyelids. Symptoms may include:

- ❑ Eye and eyelid irritation
- ❑ Itching and foreign body sensation
- ❑ Redness of the eye and eyelids
- ❑ Crusting along the eyelashes
- ❑ Blurred vision

Anterior blepharitis refers to inflammation along the front of the eyelid where the eyelashes are attached. Bacteria like *Staphylococcus*, which are normally found on the skin and hair, grow along the affected lashes and cause build-up of debris, which can further irritate the eye. *Posterior blepharitis* refers to inflammation in the meibomian (oily) glands that line the back of the eyelid.

Blepharitis can also be found in conjunction with other skin disorders, such as acne rosacea and seborrheic dermatitis (scalp dandruff).

The primary treatment for blepharitis is a good **eyelid hygiene** regimen. Over-the-counter eyelid scrubs (Ocusoft lid scrubs) can be used in the morning to remove crust and debris from the eyelashes. These pre-moistened towellettes contain a soap solution that will not irritate the eye. With your eyes closed, gently wash along the eyelashes for 15 seconds. Then wash your face as you normally would. Baby shampoo and a clean finger can be used in place of the lid scrubs, if desired.



Warm compresses 2-3 times per day can also help the blocked glands to drain more effectively. Wet a clean washcloth with warm water and place over the closed eyelids for 5-10 minutes. Re-warming the washcloth with hot water may be required during this time.

Extra lubrication in the form of **artificial tears** 4-5 times daily can help with foreign body sensation. Many brands are available over-the-counter (Refresh, Systane, Genteal, Theratears, etc.) including many generics.

Occasionally, a mild antibiotic or antibiotic/steroid combination will be prescribed for short-term use in severe cases.

Blepharitis tends to recur over time. **Good eyelid hygiene habits are the cornerstone of successful long-term treatment.**