

BLEPHARITIS

Blepharitis is an inflammatory condition of the skin of the eyelids that has no known cause. It is a common, chronic disorder that may wax and wane, but cannot be cured. The clinical signs of the disease are very straightforward and easily seen by the doctor, while the symptoms the patient experiences are varied and often found in other eye diseases. Careful examination of the eyes with a slit lamp (microscope) and the history of symptoms will lead the doctor to the diagnosis of blepharitis.

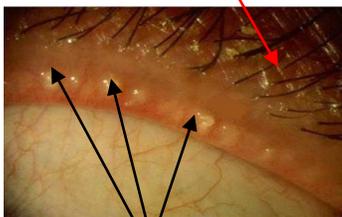
WHAT CAUSES BLEPHARITIS?

There are a number of associated factors that may predispose an individual to the disease and some environmental conditions that may contribute to the development and severity of symptoms. Blepharitis may occur at any age, but is more common in the elderly. Gender and ethnicity do not seem to affect the risk of developing the condition. Patients with skin diseases such as exzema or acne rosacea as well as those with allergies are more prone to blepharitis. Symptoms tend to occur more frequently during allergy season even in those without allergies.

HOW IS BLEPHARITIS DIAGNOSED AND HOW IS IT TREATED?

After reviewing your medical history and complaints, your doctor will examine your eyes with the slit lamp, and will make a diagnosis based on the appearance of the eyelids.

Mattering of lashes



Clogged eyelid glands

Depending on the severity of the condition, treatment may include lid scrubs, warm compresses, antibiotic drops or systemic medications. Treatment may be instituted chronically or only during flare-ups based on the doctor's recommendation.

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DRY EYE DISEASE AND BLEPHARITIS

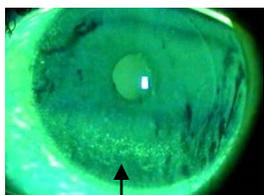
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DRY EYE SYNDROME

One of the most common ailments of the eyes and visual system is dry eyes. The condition has a wide variety of presentations with multiple symptoms and many contributing factors in its development. It has been reported that 15% of the United States population suffers from dry eye disease, with the percentage much higher for those over the age of 40. The condition is more common in women than men and has its highest incidence in post-menopausal females. Dry eye does not follow a hereditary pattern, nor does it have an ethnic preference. The disease is not curable, but with treatment can often be managed to allow the patient to have good vision, comfort and maintain a normal, active lifestyle.



Roughened cornea

HOW IS DRY EYE DIAGNOSED?

While there are a number of clinical tests and even laboratory tests that can aid in the diagnosis of dry eyes, the primary means of diagnosing the condition is by the history of symptoms. Most patients realize that a dry, scratchy feeling is probably related to dryness of the surface of the eyes, but other symptoms including itchiness, burning, tearing and even blurry vision are often the first signs of the disease. In addition to the history of symptoms, the doctor will examine the surface of the eyes often with a small amount of fluorescein dye (the yellow drop) to detect injured or damaged cells on the surface of the eye that occur with dry eyes.

HOW IS DRY EYE TREATED?

Since dry eye is a chronic condition, there is no cure. However, in most cases, the symptoms can be reduced or alleviated with therapy. Treatment will vary based on the severity of the disorder. Your doctor might recommend over the counter eye drops, over the counter supplements, prescription eye drops or a minor clinical procedure depending on your history and individual findings. Over the counter treatments tend to be well tolerated and sometimes can be effective in relieving the symptoms. However, in many cases, more aggressive therapy may be necessary. Your doctor will discuss the most appropriate treatment for your individual needs.

WHAT CAUSES DRY EYE SYNDROME?

Many factors may contribute to the development of dry eye syndrome. Aging, gender, general health and medications all may play a role in the development of dry eyes.

Signs and symptoms of dry eyes become much more common as we age and women tend to be diagnosed with dry eyes more often than men. Women are especially prone to the disease during pregnancy and post-menopause.

A number of systemic diseases increase the likelihood of dry eyes including allergies, arthritis, and some skin diseases. Many medications can result in dry eyes, especially diuretics, allergy medicines, thyroid medicines, anti-anxiety medications, birth control pills among others.



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