

# Management of the Ocular Surface

## Blepharitis

Blepharitis is a common and persistent inflammation of the eyelids producing a coating of bacteria and oily flakes at the base of your eyelashes. Your eyelids may be red, swollen, sore, or feel like they are burning. There is no cure for blepharitis, but there are a number of things you can do to help control the symptoms.

- **Hot Compresses:** Wet a clean washcloth with warm to hot water. Place the washcloth over your closed eyes for at least 1 (one) minute. Wet the washcloth as often as needed so it stays hot. This will help loosen the flakes sticking around your eyelashes. It also helps nearby oil glands from clogging.
- **Eyelid scrubs:** Soak the clean washcloth and then use it to gently scrub the base of your eyelashes for about 15 seconds.
- **Antibiotics:** Your eye doctor may have you use an antibiotic eye drop to help the oil glands work better. This should be done at bedtime or as your doctor recommends. There are some new antiseptic sprays you can use on the skin that keep bacteria from growing (<http://www.ocusoft.com/ocusoft-hypochlor-spray-02-2oz>).
- **Eye drops:** Artificial tears or steroid eye drops may reduce redness, swelling and dry eye. **Medications alone are not sufficient; the daily cleansing routine described above is essential.**
- **Skin and eyelid hygiene:** It is very important to keep your eyelids, skin and hair clean. This keeps your blepharitis symptoms under control. **This routine should be done every day.**

## Dry Eye

Our eyes need tears to stay healthy and comfortable. If your eyes do not make enough tears, it is called dry eye. Dry eye is also when your eyes do not make the right type of tears.

- **Symptoms of dry eye:**
  - Stinging or burning sensation
  - Scratchy or gritty feeling like something is in your eye
  - Strings of mucus in or around your eye
  - Red or irritated eyes
  - Painful to wear contact lenses
  - Watery eyes (your eyes make more tears when they are irritated by dry eye)
- **Causes of dry eye:**
  - Certain diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, Sjögren's syndrome, thyroid disease and lupus
  - Blepharitis
  - Being around smoke, wind, or a dry climate
  - Extended use of a computer (reduced blinking)
  - Having eye surgery, such as LASIK or Cataract surgery
  - Certain medications (water pills, heart or blood pressure medications, allergy medicines, sleeping pills or anxiety medicines)

- **Treating dry eye:**
  - Preservative free eye drops 4 or more times per day such as Refresh Optive©



- Warm compresses on the eyes every morning (see blepharitis above).
- Adding omega-3 fatty acids to your diet ([www.pnomegahealth.com](http://www.pnomegahealth.com))



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