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WHAT IS BLEPHARITIS?

Blepharitis is a common condition that causes inflammation of the eyelids. It is sometimes known as “eye dandruff” or “psoriasis of the eyelids.” The condition can be difficult to manage because it tends to recur.

WHAT CAUSES BLEPHARITIS?

There are several types of blepharitis.

Staphylococcal blepharitis affects the outside front of the eyelid, where the eyelashes are attached. This is similar to a bacterial infection, and is more likely to result in infections of the eye.

Posterior blepharitis affects the inner eyelid (the moist part that makes contact with the eye) and is caused by problems with the oil glands in this part of the eyelid. Two skin disorders – acne rosacea and scalp dandruff – are common causes of this form of blepharitis.

Seborrheic blepharitis is caused by an excessive discharge of oil or grease from the skin around the eyelids. It is usually accompanied by similarly greasy hair or skin.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Red and swollen eyelid rims
- Excessive tearing, burning, or itching of the eyelid area
- Discharge or scaly skin around eyelids
- Crusting of the eyelids upon awakening or frothy tears
- Dry or irritated eyes



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HOW CAN I TREAT BLEPHARITIS?

Treatment for both forms of blepharitis involves keeping the lids clean and free of crusts. Warm compresses should be applied to the lid, followed by a light scrubbing of the eyelid with a mixture of water and baby shampoo. Your doctor may also recommend adding a lid scrubbing agent or medicated pads to help improve hygiene and remove excess oils from this area.

Because blepharitis rarely goes away completely, most patients must maintain a long-term eyelid hygiene routine. If more severe, an antibiotic or steroid ointment may be prescribed.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING?

Complications from blepharitis can include:

Stye: A red tender bump on the eyelid that is caused by an acute infection of the oil glands of the eyelid.

Chalazion: This condition can follow the development of a stye. It is usually a painless firm lump caused by inflammation of the oil glands of the eyelid. Chalazion can be painful and red if there is also an infection.

Dry Eye: Abnormal oil secretions on the eyelid area can get into the eye and cause dryness, burning, and irritation. Because tears are necessary to keep the cornea (front of the eye) healthy, tear film problems can increase the risk for corneal infections. This risk is also higher for contact lens wearers.