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Blepharitis

What is Blepharitis?

Blepharitis is a common and persistent inflammation of the eyelids. Symptoms include irritation, itching, and occasionally, a red eye.

This condition frequently occurs in people who have tendency towards oily skin, dandruff, or dry eyes. Blepharitis can begin in early childhood, producing granulated eyelids and continue throughout life as a chronic condition, or develop later in life.

Bacteria reside on the surface of everyone's skin, but in certain individuals they thrive in the skin at the base of the eyelashes. The resulting in irritation sometimes associated with over activity of the nearby oil gland, causes dandruff-like scales and particles to form along the lashes and eye lid margins.
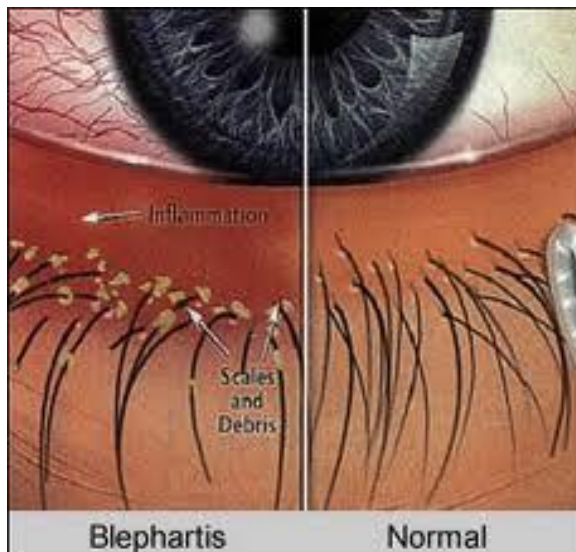
How is blepharitis treated?

Blepharitis is a condition that may not be cured, but it can be controlled with a few simple daily measures:

- At least twice a day, we a washcloth with comfortably warm water, wring it out, and place over the closed eyelids for a minute. Rewet it as it cools, two or three times. This will soften and loosen scaled and debris.
- With your finger covered with a thin washcloth, cotton swab, or commercial lint-free pad, gently scrub the base of the lashes about 15 seconds per lid.
- If an antibiotic ointment has been prescribed, apply a dab at the base of the lashes (usually at bedtime), using your fingertip or cotton swab.
- Artificial tears may be used to relieve symptoms of dry eyes.
- Steroids may be used short-term to decrease inflammation.
- Antibiotics may be used to decrease the bacterial content of the eyelids. If the inflammation is severe, sometimes long-term tetracycline (by mouth) is used, especially for people who have a skin condition called Rosacea

Medications alone are not sufficient; the application of warmth and daily detailed cleansing of the lashes is the key to controlling blepharitis.