

FORSTER EYE SURGERY

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BLEPHARITIS TREATMENT

Blepharitis is an inflammatory condition of the eyelids and eyelashes. A row of oil secreting glands in the eyelids (Meibomian glands) malfunction. The glands fill with a thick secretion which causes local inflammation, irritation and in turn the tear film deteriorates. Unfortunately it cannot be cured but it can usually be controlled with the treatment outlined below.

Treatment is aimed at

1. Replacing and stabilising the tear film
2. Reducing the inflammation
3. Improving the function of the meibomian glands.

TREATMENT REGIME

- Doxycycline (or Minocycline) 50mg tablet daily with food. In rare cases these tablets may cause a serious photosensitive rash so protect yourself from the sun and stop taking immediately if you develop a rash
- Warm compress and clean lashes twice a day
- Apply steroid eye drops if prescribed (FML, Maxidex) morning and lunch
- Ointment (Hycor) at night just before retiring
- Lubricating eye drops or gels as needed (Optive, Systane, Genteal, Refresh, Cellufresh etc).
- Saline Eye Wash as needed

1. Replacing and stabilising the tear film

a) Artificial tears such as Refresh, Genteal, Cellufresh, Systane, Optive, Viscotears, etc are used to supplement the tear film. These should be used regularly as required (up to every hour) and can also be used through the night. Drops with modified preservative or no preservative are preferred over those with the preservative benzalkonium chloride.

b) Saline eyewash – homemade saline eyewash can be made using 600ml (1 pint) of boiled water to 1 level teaspoon of common table salt. An alternative is to use a level teaspoon of bi-carb soda instead of the salt. This solution can safely be kept for 24 – 48 hours in the refrigerator. The eye can then be bathed using an eye cup (available at most pharmacies).



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2. Reducing the inflammation

- Eyelid Hygiene – perform twice daily
 - Cleaning residual scale from the eyelids is very beneficial.
 - Lid Care proprietary wipes are available from chemists. Use as directed on package.
 - In mild cases using a warm compress followed by eyelid massage and wiping can be sufficient. Place a facecloth under warm water, squeeze out excess water and place the face cloth over both eyes to gently apply heat to the eyelid. Apply for approximately 30 seconds. Use fingers to massage the eyelids from the outside towards the centre of the eye. Gently wipe any crusting or secretions from the eyelids with the face cloth.
 - In more severe cases a cotton bud can be used dipped in either saline or very diluted baby shampoo.
 - Hycor ointment, a steroid eye ointment can also be used once or twice a day. A small quantity (5mm) is instilled just inside the bottom eyelid. The eye is then closed to help spread the ointment.

3. Improving the function of the meibomian glands

a) Eyelid hygiene combined with warm packs (see above).

b) Doxycycline/ Minocyclin - these antibiotics remove any infection, reduce inflammation and help the meibomian gland produce a normal secretion. They are slow acting and take at least three weeks to have any significant effect. The antibiotic should be continued for 60 to 120 days. They are usually well tolerated but like any antibiotic they can give some people upset stomach and predispose to thrush. They may also cause a photosensitive rash.

