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# Northern Eye

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## Blepharitis

Blepharitis (lid margin disorder) is a common, persistent inflammation of the eyelids. Symptoms include irritation, itching, and occasionally, a red eye. This condition frequently occurs in people who have a tendency towards oily skin, dandruff, or dry eyes.

Bacteria normally reside on everyone's skin, but in some people they thrive in the skin at the base of the eyelashes. Nearby oil glands may be overactive, causing dandruff-like scales and particles to form along the lashes and eyelid margins, which can cause redness, stinging or burning.

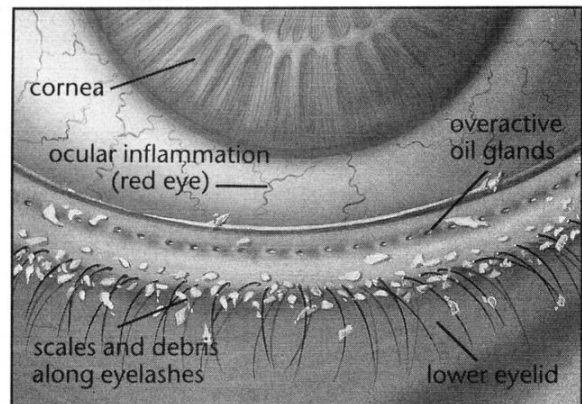
Blepharitis may not be cured, but it can be controlled with a few simple daily hygienic measures:

- At least twice a day, place a warm, wet washcloth over the closed eyelids for a minute. Rewet it as it cools, two or three times. This will soften and loosen scales and debris. More importantly, it helps liquefy the oily secretions from the eyelids' oil glands that help prevent the development of a chalazion, an inflamed lump in an eyelid oil gland.
- 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.

When medications are necessary, they may include:

- Artificial tears to relieve symptoms of dry eye. (These are eye drops that are available without a prescription.)
- Antibiotics (oral or topical) to decrease bacteria on the eyelids.
- Occasionally steroids (short-term) to decrease inflammation.

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



In blepharitis, both upper and lower eyelids become coated with oily debris and bacteria near the base of the eyelashes. The eye feels irritated and may become inflamed. Regular, thorough cleansing of the lid margin helps control blepharitis.