

Managing Blepharitis

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The purpose of this article is to help people who suffer from blepharitis manage it in the most successful way possible. As far as I know, blepharitis cannot be cured. It will likely be an issue for a sufferer for the remainder of their lifetime. I have dealt with it for nearly 10 years, though things have improved.

Note: I am not a doctor. I am a semi-retired school teacher. The advice in this article is **not** to be used as a substitute for licensed medical care. Please consult your doctor(s) for their advice.



Depressing, I know. I am 62 years old, in the year 2024. Blepharitis is not something I was born with, or had for the majority of my life. I just woke up from a nap one afternoon and felt a fuzzy, itchy feeling in and around my eyes. I didn't know what it was. I went to the bathroom sink to rinse my eyes with cold water.

I would often take an afternoon nap after work. I was a 30 year career teacher and technology coordinator in public schools at a variety of levels, K-12. I spent an inordinate amount of time in front of thousands of screens (Macs, Windows PCs, laptops, dim dark ChromeBooks, tablets, LCD projectors, and phones). Because of the discomfort blepharitis caused me when typing, doing web design, and reading text on these screens, I had to make the difficult decision to retire several years earlier than I had anticipated¹. I imagine a lot of people with blepharitis face these same challenges. And with age, vision starts to deteriorate, too.

Rinsing my eyes at the bathroom sink became a regular regiment from then on. Cold water provided some temporary relief, but I found warm water was more comfortable and soothing. Warm water, however, was seldom available in public school restrooms, even for faculty. I found a lot more relief from the bathroom sink when I got home. When showering, a gentle warm spray in the face from a hand held shower head was also helpful. I have found now that I do need to be extra careful to close my eyes in the shower when shampooing and rinsing, as the irritation from the suds is more irritating now than before, when blepharitis showed up in my eyes.

There are a lot of treatments that can be done daily in the home that are far more effective than simply rinsing your eyes with tap water. There are a number of over-the-counter products a blepharitis sufferer can use to help manage their condition, whose benefits I will go into a bit later.



Seeing an eye doctor to find out if you have blepharitis (or some other condition), is the first step. Keeping your eyes and the environment around your eyes clean is essential in minimizing the discomfort and blurriness you likely experience daily.

What is blepharitis?

See this brief, but informative article from the Internet on blepharitis from [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/blepharitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20370141)
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/blepharitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20370141>

See the following page for a brief synopsis generated by Google AI.

¹ I was 59 at the time I turned in my retirement papers to my principal, just months before the COVID-19 shutdown of schools in April of 2020. In a way, I guess, it was fortunate timing, because my colleagues spent the better part of the next two years 'teaching' via Zoom (100% screen time). We know that didn't go well....

Google™ AI Overview of Blepharitis²

Blepharitis is a common eye condition that causes inflammation of the eyelids and can also affect the conjunctiva, the membrane that covers the eyeball and eyelid. It can cause the eyelids to become red, swollen, irritated, and itchy, and can also lead to crusty, dandruff-like flakes on the eyelashes. Other symptoms include:

- Greasy, crusted scales on the eyelids
- Eyelids sticking together in the morning
- Dried tears around the eyes
- A gritty feeling in the eyes

Blepharitis is an inflammation along the edges of the eyelids. The eyelids can become irritated and itchy, and appear greasy and crusted with scales that cling to the lashes. People with blepharitis sometimes wake with their eyelids stuck together. Others may wake with dried tears around their eyes and a feeling of sand in their eyes. In this picture, the yellow around the eye is from a yellow dye sometimes used in diagnostic tests.

(Source: *Blepharitis - Symptoms & Causes - Mayo Clinic*)

Blepharitis is a common eye condition that makes your eyelids red, swollen, irritated, and itchy. It can cause crusty dandruff-like flakes on your eyelashes. Blepharitis can be uncomfortable. But it isn't contagious, and it usually doesn't cause any lasting damage to your eyes. **(Source: *National Eye Institute*)**

Although blepharitis can be uncomfortable, it's usually not contagious and doesn't typically cause lasting damage to the eyes. However, if left untreated, it can potentially lead to complications such as keratopathy, corneal neovascularization and ulceration, and permanent changes to the eyelid's shape. The exact cause of blepharitis is unknown, but it's thought to be caused by an abnormality in the oil-producing glands on the eyelids. Other factors that may contribute include: Abnormal bacteria in and around the oil-producing glands, oily skin, Dandruff, Dry eyes, and Rosacea. There's no cure for blepharitis, but there are treatments that can help control symptoms, including:

- Warm compresses
- Eyelid scrubs (keeping your eyelids, skin, and hair clean)
- Antibiotics
- Eye drops
- Omega-3s (fish oil)
- Using an electronic device that uses heat and massage to unclog oil glands
- Avoiding eye makeup until the inflammation is managed
- Blepharitis is diagnosed during an eye exam.

(Source: *Penn Medicine*)

² *This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional. Generative AI is experimental.*

Consumer Products for Managing Blepharitis

The items pictured below were all purchased via Amazon, but most can be found at CVS or Walgreens, and some can be found at Target, Walmart, and a few at Costco. The descriptions of their use are mine. Please read all manufacturer's packaging for their recommendations for proper use.



This item: Refresh Optive MEGA-3 Lubricant Eye Drops
Preservative-Free Artificial Tear...
4.7 ★★★★★ 19,443
-19% \$17⁸⁶ (\$59.53/Fl Oz)

There are many brands of eye drops on the market, some with preservatives that last a long time, and others that are preservative-free, single use vials that can expire. I've tried many, but the ones pictured here (*Refresh Optive Mega-3*), have worked out best for me. You can use a vial about 3-4 times before it runs out (each vial can be re-capped). A box of vials can last a month or more. I use them only when my eyes feel dry. If you are dedicated to keeping your eyes clean, you may not need to use these as often to deal with dry eye. Do not allow the vial to make contact with eyes.



Overall Pick

OCuSOFT
Lid Scrub Original 35 Count
Inflation Buster with 5 Extra Pads
35 Count (Pack of 1)
★★★★★ ~ 783
10K+ bought in past month
\$10⁹⁵ (\$0.31/Count)
Save more with Subscribe & Save

These OcuSoft scrubbing pads are my go-to every morning when I wake up. I rinse my face first, preferably with warm water, leaving your face somewhat wet, which helps activate the foaming action of the cleanser in the pad. Use the cleaning pad around one eye (when closed), making circular, horizontal and vertical movements with the applying hand. Then flip the pad over and clean the other eye. Finally, rinse your closed eyes again and blot your eyes dry. Note: If you happen to have a [chalazion](#) in one eye at the time of use, use a separate pad for each eye until the chalazion completely clears up.



NOVEHA
Eyelid and Lash Cleanser - Fast Acting
Soothing Formula, Effective Relief
from Irritation, Dry Eyes, Styes and...
1.01 Fl Oz (Pack of 1)
★★★★★ ~ 1,221
700+ bought in past month
\$17⁹⁹ (\$17.81/Fl Oz)

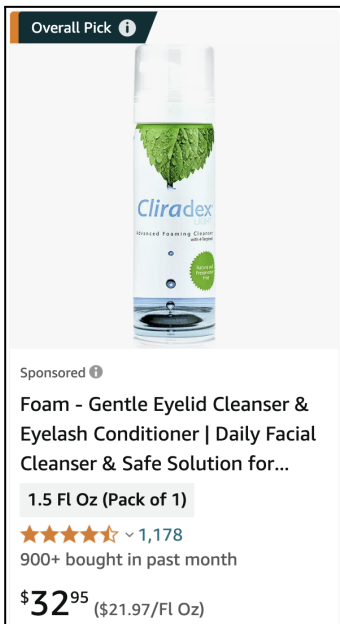
After using the OcuSoft scrubbing pads above, I use the Noveha Antimicrobial Eyelid and Lash Cleanser. There are several ways this can be applied (see package for instructions). My preferred method is to close one eye, then spray 3-4 pumps on the closed eye, wait a few seconds, then wipe off with a cotton facial pad. Close the other eye, spray, then wipe off with the other side of the cotton pad. I also use this cleanser at night before going to sleep.



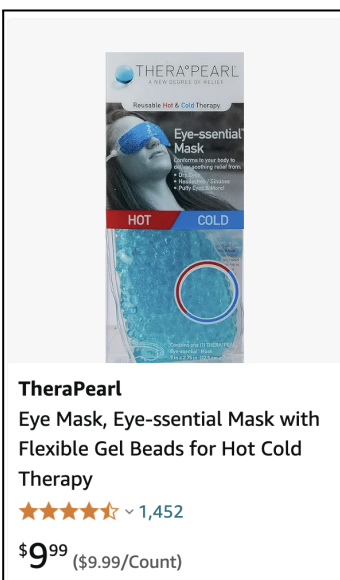
Swisspers Premium Exfoliating Rounds,
2 Distinct Raised Textured Surface,
Cotton Facial Pads, 80 Count Re-
closable Bag
4.8 ★★★★★ ~ 32,559 ratings | Search this page
20K+ bought in past month
Price: \$3.68 (\$0.05 / Count)
Get a \$50 Gift Card: Pay \$0.00 \$9.68 upon approval for Amazon Visa. No annual fee.
Size: 80 Count (Pack of 1)
Brand: Swisspers
Material: Cotton
Product Benefits: Exfoliating, Cleansing
Shape: Round
About this item

- Dual-sided, one surface for exfoliation, one for more gentle use
- Use the raised, textured surface to gently scrub away makeup and dull skin cells to reveal a smoother, brighter complexion
- Use the soft, embossed surface to remove makeup and nail polish, or to apply lotions, toners, astringents, and creams
- Multi-layer design and stitched edge create a durable, plush pad that won't leave pieces behind.
- Hypoallergenic - made from 100% cotton

You can save money by buying a dozen sleeves of the Swissps pads at Costco. A 4 oz. bottle of Noveha is also available on Amazon for a lower price per ounce..



Cliradex is a foaming cleanser that I only use occasionally. It is effective, but very strong to the point of almost being irritating. It's an expensive product, but you only need a dime-sized amount on one fingertip, which you then activate by swirling it between your index finger and thumb, then apply it over closed eyes. Having your eyelids moistened with warm water beforehand helps the foam gently cover your closed eyes. Leave it on for a minute or so before rinsing it off. Keep your eyes closed for the entire procedure, or you will experience extreme eye irritation!



I use this heatable/freezable mask nightly. Just before I'm ready to fall asleep, I warm my mask in the microwave for about 15 seconds (your microwave and mask may require a different amount of time). Doctors have told me that heat is a deterrent to the microscopic bacteria (demodex mites) that live in the lashes and other inhabitable areas around the eyes. Heat is also supposed to allow the oil glands that may be clogged in the lids to relax, releasing the oils, allowing the oil to flow. Gentle pressure with your clean fingertips above the upper and below the lower lids independently may help minimally express (purge) these oils. Be sure to keep the surfaces of the mask clean. For me, it is helpful for going to sleep.

Amazon also carries heatable masks that are USB-powered that provide continuous heat, that is even adjustable. I have not tried any of those. Consult your doctor about using those.

Conclusion

I had never heard of blepharitis when I first went to an ophthalmologist in my HMO regarding my condition. I saw numerous eye doctors via my HMO, but most gave me less information than I have provided here. I also saw several eye doctors that I paid for out-of-pocket, whose suggestions included many of the products and routines I have described here.

As I said earlier, my experience dealing with blepharitis has improved with consistent attention to it. This allowed me to return to teaching as a paraprofessional, with almost no use of technology. I advise you not to become complacent, even if you feel like things are improving. Blepharitis will likely get worse if you do. If you find another routine or product that is effective for blepharitis, please let me know at anker.henry@gmail.com
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