

What is blepharitis?

ASK YOUR OPTOMETRIST

Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids causing red, irritated, itchy eyelids and the formation of dandruff-like scales on eyelashes. It is a common eye disorder caused by either bacteria or a skin condition such as dandruff of the scalp or acne rosacea. It affects people of all ages. Although uncomfortable, blepharitis is not contagious and generally does not cause any permanent damage to eyesight.

Individuals with blepharitis may experience a gritty or burning sensation in their eyes, excessive tearing, itching, red and swollen eyelids, dry eyes, or crusting of the eyelids. For some people, blepharitis causes only minor irritation and itching. However, it can lead to more severe signs and symptoms such as blurring of vision, missing or misdirected eyelashes, and inflammation of other eye tissue, particularly the cornea.

In many cases, good eyelid hygiene and a regular cleaning routine can control blepharitis. This includes frequent scalp and face washing, using warm compresses to soak the eyelids, and doing eyelid scrubs.



Because blepharitis rarely goes away completely, most people must maintain an eyelid hygiene routine for life. If the blepharitis is severe, your optometrist may also prescribe antibiotics or steroid eyedrops.