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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 oily skin, dandruff or dry eyes.

Blepharitis can begin in early childhood, producing "granulated eyelids," and continue throughout life as a chronic condition; or it can 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 irritation, sometimes associated with over activity of the nearby oil glands, causes dandruff-like scales and particles to form along the lashes and eyelid margins. For some people the scales or bacteria associated with blepharitis produce only minor irritation and itching, but in others they may cause redness, stinging or burning. Some people may develop an allergy to the scales or to the bacteria which surround them. This can lead to a more serious complication, inflammation of the eye tissues, particularly the cornea.

How is Blepharitis treated?

Blepharitis can be a stubborn problem. Although there is no specific cure, it can be controlled through a careful, regular program of hygiene. Many medications are available for the treatment of blepharitis, including antibiotics and steroid preparations. Although steroid medications often hasten relief of symptoms, long-term use can cause harmful side effects. Once the acute phase of the condition is overcome, which may take several weeks, milder medications may be helpful to control your blepharitis.