

Posterior Blepharitis and Evaporative Dry Eye

Summary: You have 30 oil glands in each eyelid which should secrete a thin oil slick on the surface of your eye to keep the tears from evaporating. Your oil glands are clogged with waxy congealed oil. With no oil slick, your tears are evaporating, and the resulting dry spots are causing irritation. (This may cause emergency or reflex watering which makes the diagnosis of dry eyes seem illogical.)

The waxy secretions must be melted and squeezed out on a daily basis to restore more normal function and prevent tear evaporation.

Details: In addition to above, the waxy, backed-up oil glands harbor bacteria which make the secretions of the glands more acidic and toxic to the surface of the eyes.

The bacteria may also form crusts along the edges of the lids –if you also have this condition, you will be given a description of anterior blepharitis.

Rosacea is a chronic condition of the skin which may be associated with adult acne and redness of the nose and cheeks which is worsened by cold weather, spicy foods, and alcohol. Clogged oil glands are frequently associated with rosacea. One treatment for the oil glands which is very helpful for both posterior blepharitis and rosacea is long term treatment with oral tetracycline or doxycycline, antibiotics which are very commonly used for long periods in teenagers with acne. Long-term, low dose doxycycline is well tolerated, tends to thin and cleanse the oil secretions, and is NOT associated with problems which you may have heard to be associated with long-term antibiotic use. Both rosacea and posterior blepharitis are associated with lumps within the eyelid which are caused by blockage, infection and leaking of the oil glands around which the body makes a cyst or lump of scar tissue (chalazion).

Treatment:

You must purge the oil glands of the waxy secretions on a daily basis. This means warming your lids with AT LEAST 5 minutes of warm compresses. Keep warming up a thick washcloth and applying to closed lids for 5 minutes. Then you must massage the lids for at least ONE MINUTE to force out the melted secretions. Massage the lid against the eyeball in a circular motion or toward the lid edges firmly for one minute.

You may be given a prescription for doxycycline to be taken twice daily for several weeks and daily for 3 to 6 months.

Hot Compresses for Blepharitis

1. Use hot water from faucet or heat a pan of water until hot to the touch, but not hot enough to burn.
2. Place clean face cloth or other clean cloth in the hot water, and then wring out cloth slightly so that it is hot and moist.
3. Fold into square and roll up like a hotdog bun. Hold firmly to closed lids.
4. Repeat dipping in hot water and wringing out slightly whenever the cloth becomes cool.
5. If you unfold the “bun” it may be warm inside.
6. Continue for at least 5 minutes. (15 minutes is better.)
7. Massage lids gently with fingertips for 1 minute.
8. Repeat 1 or 2 times daily.....forever.

Maintenance and Treatment

Duration

Hot Compresses/Lid Massage.....	Indefinitely
Artificial Tears (especially Reading/Computer/T.V.)	Indefinitely
*Flaxseed Oil 1000mg/day	1 Year
*Omega 3 Fish Oil 1000 Units/day	1 Year
Doxycycline orally 50mg/ 2xday for 2 wks; then daily.....	3 Months
Steroid/ Antibiotic-Steroid drops	2 Weeks

* Examples of Flaxseed/Omega 3 combinations:

Theratears Nutrition
Dry Eye Omega Benefits
Pro Health
* Hydroeye (available in our office)
PRN Eye Omega (prnomegahealth.com)

Reasons for treatment “failure”:

1. Inadequate or too short application of heat. “I let the shower run on my face for a minute.” This will not work! The heat must be sustained and constant in order to penetrate the skin and eyelid muscles to get to the oil glands.
2. Lack of persistence. “I did it for the month of January and now I’m having problems in April.” This is a chronic problem that needs daily maintenance indefinitely.