

Patient Information – Accident and Emergency

Marginal keratitis

What is marginal keratitis?

Marginal keratitis is an inflammation of the cornea – the clear window on the front of your eye – and is usually due to a condition called blepharitis (please see the separate information leaflet on blepharitis). Less commonly, it is caused by wearing contact lenses.

Your eyelids contain tiny glands that make oil which keeps your eyes moist. In blepharitis, these glands become blocked, which causes your eyelids to become irritated and your eyes sore. In some cases, dandruff-like flakes build up at the base of the eyelashes.

It is thought that, in some people, blepharitis is partly caused by sensitivity to the bacteria (staphylococcus) which normally live on the skin. The surface of the eye can become inflamed. The eye becomes red and sore and may develop small white ulcers around the edge of the cornea. This is called marginal keratitis.

What is the treatment?

Lid hygiene – to treat the blepharitis which causes marginal keratitis, you need to undertake good “lid hygiene”. You should do this once or twice a day even when you do not have any symptoms, to prevent marginal keratitis from recurring.

- **Warm compresses** – Use water that is hot, but not hot enough to burn. Soak cotton wool or a clean flannel in the water, wring out and gently press onto your closed eyelids for two to three minutes at a time. This melts the oily secretion blocking the openings of the glands and softens any lash flakes.
- **Lid massage** – Massage your eyelids by gently rolling your index finger over them in a circular motion or running the length of your finger up and down your eyelids towards your eyelashes. This helps to push out the oil from the tiny eyelid glands.
- **Lid scrubs** – Use a moistened cotton bud to gently clean the inside edge of your eyelids and more firmly scrub off any flakes on the lashes. This is best done in front of a mirror.

Antibiotics and steroid drops or ointments

Antibiotics drops or ointment can be useful along with steroid drops to calm down any eye inflammation. Your eye doctor will discuss with you whether this treatment is suitable for you.

When to seek advice

If your eye becomes increasingly red or painful, your sight becomes more blurred or you see white patches getting bigger on the cornea, you should telephone Moorfields Eye Hospital Direct for advice on 020 7566 2345 or attend your local A&E department or the Moorfields 24/7 A&E department which is open for emergency eye problems **only** for a further examination.

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Phone: 020 7253 3411

www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct Advice line

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm,

for information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325

Email: pals@moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to start their consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further – see above for contact details. For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, please visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.