

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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# Meibomian Gland Dysfunction

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### What is Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD)?

Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD) is a long-term condition which occurs when the glands in the eyelids don't produce the right amount of oils/fats in the tear film. This can result in eye problems due to evaporation of the natural tears, inflammation of the eyelid margin and infection of the glands themselves. There is no actual cure, but many treatments are available to keep symptoms under control.



### What are the possible causes of MGD?

- Aging.
- Changes in hormone levels (e.g., menopause).
- Some skin conditions e.g., rosacea.
- Demodex overgrowth (mites that normally live on the lids/lashes).

### If you have MGD you may suffer from any of the following symptoms:

- Watery eyes.
- Sore, red, inflamed eyelids.
- Light sensitivity.
- Fluctuations in vision.
- Burning/gritty sensation in the eyes.
- Eyelids that can be difficult to open in the mornings.
- Debris/flaky skin around the eyelids (like dandruff).
- Contact lens discomfort or loss of tolerance to contact lenses.

The most important treatment is **lid hygiene measures** which will:

- Unblock the eyelid glands.
- Remove flakes or bacteria.
- Encourage healthy tears to lubricate the eye.

## Lid hygiene

### Warm compresses:

- Warmth is used to melt the fatty substance in the Meibomian glands so it can be more easily expressed. This will also soften any crusts attached to the eyelids.
- Gently press the warm flannel or cotton wool pad that has been dipped in warm water (boiled-not boiling) over each eye for 3 minutes.
- You may need to re-soak and reapply to ensure warmth of the flannel/ cotton pad is maintained.
- Alternatively, you may purchase a reusable eye mask that can be heated in the microwave e.g., Blephabag. Available from most pharmacies.
- There are also many hand-held electrical heating devices or steam masks available online (please follow the manufacturers' instructions and purchase only from reputable sites).



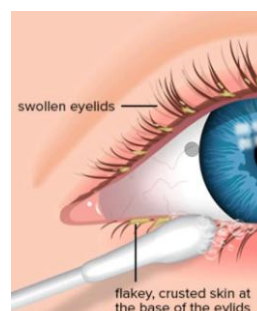
### Eyelid massage:

- Massage the eyelids with your index finger or a cotton tip towards the eyelashes.
- For the upper eyelid, use a downward motion.
- For the lower eyelid, use an upward motion.
- This action should be repeated 5-10 times over 30 seconds after the application of heat.
- This will encourage the oil to be expressed from the eyelid glands.



### Lid margin cleaning:

- After warm compresses and massage, clean the eyelid margins using a side-to-side motion to remove debris from the eyelids and lashes.
- This is best achieved using a cotton bud dipped in cooled boiled water or Blephasol solution (available to purchase at most pharmacies).



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alternatively, pre-packed Blephawipes are available for purchase. If you have been informed you have demodex overgrowth, tea tree oil wipes are also available which specifically address this.</li></ul> |  |
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It is recommended to perform lid hygiene **twice a day initially** and then frequency can be reduced as symptoms improve, but once daily is recommended long-term. Consistency is key so make it a part of your daily routine to ensure the best results.

Dry eye drops with a high lipid content such as Systane Balance or Evotears are the most beneficial eye lubricants as MGD results in an evaporative dry eye due to the loss of lipid layer. These can either be bought over the counter or a prescription provided which you may ask your GP to put on repeat. These can be used as frequently as required but we would suggest a minimum of four times daily to control symptoms.

In addition to the above, your eye doctor may advise a short-term course of eye ointment or a course of oral antibiotics.

#### **Further general advice:**

- A diet high in omega-3 fats can help improve symptoms of MGD e.g., oily fish such as mackerel, salmon, herring and fresh tuna, or flaxseed. Alternatively, omega-3 supplements can be purchased. It can take between 6 to 12 months to see an effect of this.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly before touching your eyes or performing any lid hygiene steps. This helps prevent the transfer of bacteria and reduces the risk of infection.
- Washing your bedding, especially pillowcases, at least once a week in hot water can help reduce the risk of eye infections. Avoid sharing towels.

Eye make-up, particularly eyeliner, may make symptoms worse. Old/ expired eye makeup should never be used.

#### **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

#### **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

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