

Blepharitis and Meibomitis

What Is Blepharitis And Meibomitis?

On the edges of both the upper and lower eyelids, there is a row of oil glands. The oil produced by these glands plays an important role in keeping the eye moist. It coats the surface of tears, preventing them from evaporating and the eyes from drying.

Often bacteria can enter these glands, which can contribute to blepharitis and meibomitis. Meibomitis causes the glands to become irritated and inflamed, whereas with blepharitis, it is the roots of the eyelashes that are affected.

What Are Some Effects Of Blepharitis And Meibomitis?

If you have either of these conditions, you may find that:

- You rub or scratch your eyes often as they itch or burn. They may also feel sandy and gritty.
- You often get styes or cysts.
- Your eyes are red, dry and feel tired.
- The margins of your eyelids are red and swollen.
- There are crusts, scales and flakes around your eyelashes.

You may be more likely to have blepharitis and meibomitis if you also have serious scalp dandruff or particularly oily skin around the nose and face as these are sometimes associated with the conditions.

How Are Blepharitis And Meibomitis Treated?

Blepharitis and meibomitis are long-term problems that cannot be completely cured. Your doctor will assess your eyes and formulate a treatment method that will best fit you to manage the effects of blepharitis or meibomitis.

Lid Hygiene

You can use commercial eyelid cleaning solutions to clean your eyelid margins and eyelashes twice a day.

Warm compresses

Warm compresses can be used to reduce the inflammation of the oil glands. The warm temperature makes the oil more liquid, which eases blockage in the glands and soothes irritation. Run a clean face towel under hot water and hold it against your eyes for five minutes.

Artificial tears

Blocked and inflamed oil glands release less oil to coat tears. The result is an increase in tear evaporation and therefore, dry and irritated eyes. This can be relieved by applying artificial tears to moisten and soothe the eyes. For mild cases, preserved artificial tears can be used up to four times a day. For severe cases, preservative-free artificial tears are recommended instead. These can be used more than four times a day – they can even be applied every few minutes if necessary.

Antibiotic eye ointments

Antibiotics can be applied as ointment to the eyelids to clean out bacteria, reduce inflammation and moisten the eye like artificial tears. Whilst they lubricate the eye for longer periods, they also blur vision slightly. Consequently, these ointments are useful at bedtime but are not recommended for daytime use when artificial tears are best used instead.

Anti-inflammatory eyedrops

In severe cases, anti-inflammatory eyedrops containing steroids may be necessary to reduce inflammation. This will prevent excessive damage to the surface of the eye, but can have a high risk of side effects particularly if used long-term. Your doctor will discuss with you if the benefits of steroid drops outweigh the risks.

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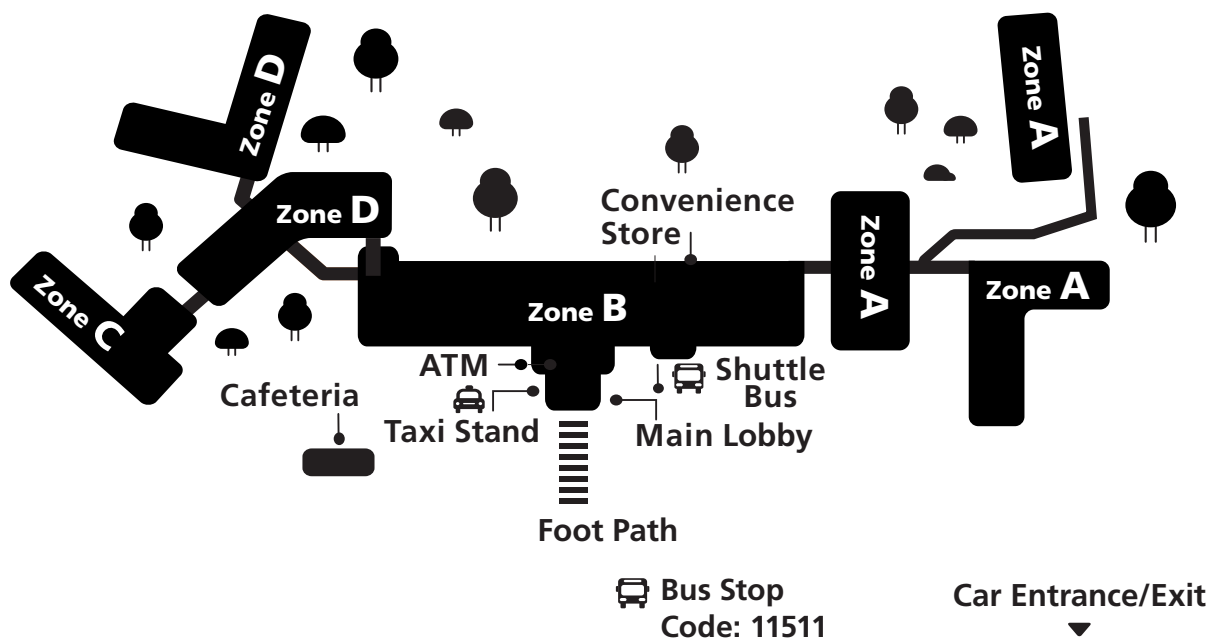
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Information is correct at time of printing Oct 2023 and subject to revision without prior notice.