



Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD)

The meibomian gland openings are dotted along the rims of the eyelids. They produce a thin clear oily fluid, which spreads over the watery layer of tears to reduce their evaporation.

In meibomian gland dysfunction, the fluid produced is too thick and blocks the openings to the glands. This can lead to discomfort in and around the eyes, blurred vision (which clears on blinking), mildly sticky lids on waking, and a red swollen appearance to the eyelids.

Treatment

The eyelids are warmed for 5 to 10 minutes using a special MGD pad or warm water on a flannel or cotton wool. This is followed by massage of the eyelids to push the fluid from the gland openings. With your eyes closed, rub or roll a finger up and away from the nose on the bottom eyelid, then down and away from the nose for the top eyelid. Repeat the massage 5 to 10 times and ensure you massage each eyelid all the way to the margin (rim). Dry your eyelids if they are wet. Repeat up to 4 times a day until your symptoms improve and then continue once a day for the next six months.

Blinking hard occasionally during the day and generally blinking more frequently may also help this condition.

Nutrition that may lower the risk of suffering from dry eye and MGD

Omega-3s (essential fatty acids): These are found in fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, trout, and sardines. They are also found in flaxseed oil and evening primrose oil. If you are taking medicines that reduce your cholesterol such as 'statins', consult your GP before increasing your consumption of omega-3s, because they may increase your blood cholesterol.

Zinc may help reduce dry eye symptoms. Zinc can be found in shellfish, seeds, red meat, eggs, peas, turnip, cereals, green leafy vegetables, and nuts.

Zinc levels in the body are reduced by the consumption of wheat, bran, and alcohol.