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**Blepharokeratoconjunctivitis  
(BKC) in children**



## Patient information

# Blepharo- keratoconjunctivitis (BKC) in children

Information for parents,  
children and young people



## **What is blepharokeratoconjunctivitis (BKC)?**

Blepharitis is a common condition causing inflammation of the eyelids, leading to redness, swelling and irritation. It often affects both eyelids and can occur at any age. It is a long-term condition that does not improve without treatment. When inflammation affects both the cornea and conjunctiva, this is known as blepharokeratoconjunctivitis. Blepharitis alone does not usually affect vision; however, inflammation of the cornea may potentially reduce vision.

BKC is **not contagious** – it cannot be passed from one person to another like an infection such as conjunctivitis.

## **Why does blepharokeratoconjunctivitis happen?**

Your eyelids contain small glands that produce oils to keep your eyes healthy. In BKC, these glands can become blocked, leading to irritated eyelids and dry, sore eyes. Contributing factors include bacterial infections, poor eyelid hygiene, allergies, dandruff, excess oil production and skin conditions such as acne rosacea.

Because BKC can inflame the clear front surface of the eye (cornea), **if it is not treated properly, it can sometimes affect vision**. This is why regular treatment and eye clinic follow-up are important.

## **Symptoms**

- Crusty, red and swollen eyelids
- Redness of the white of the eyes
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Flakes on eyelashes
- Eyelid irritation and itchiness causing frequent blinking or eye-rubbing
- Gritty or burning sensation
- Loss of eyelashes
- Sticky eyelids in the morning
- Dry eyes
- Watery eyes
- Occasional blurred or fluctuating vision

## **How is it diagnosed?**

Diagnosis is made by examining the eyelids and eyelashes. A slit-lamp microscope may be used to assess whether the cornea and conjunctiva are affected.

## **How is BKC treated?**

There is no single cure, but symptoms improve significantly with regular eyelid hygiene. This includes warm compresses for 5–10 minutes, eyelid massage to express oils, and eyelid cleaning using cotton buds or commercial lid-cleaning products. Good skin and hair hygiene also help.

Children with BKC are usually followed up regularly by the eye clinic to keep the inflammation controlled and to check their vision and cornea

If your child is sensitive to light, wearing a peaked cap or sunglasses outdoors can make them more comfortable.

Most children respond very well to treatment, but flare-ups can still happen from time to time

## Other treatment options

These may include medicated lid wipes, warm eye masks, Omega-3 supplements, artificial tears, short courses of antibiotic ointment, oral antibiotics and steroid eye drops under specialist supervision.

In older children and teenagers, your specialist may recommend a longer course of antibiotic tablets (for example doxycycline or similar medicines). These are not usually needed in younger children and are always prescribed and monitored by the eye team

Steroid eye drops must **only** be used under specialist supervision and should not be started or re-started from old bottles without advice, as they can have side effects if used incorrectly.

## Will BKC come back?

Symptoms are likely to return if eyelid cleaning is stopped. Long-term maintenance treatment is often required. Restart eyelid hygiene promptly if symptoms return. This is not usually an emergency unless symptoms change significantly or vision worsens.

## Preventing flare-ups

- Continue daily eyelid hygiene even when symptoms improve,
- Encourage good hand hygiene,
- Avoid rubbing the eyes,
- Avoid smoky or dusty environments,
- Avoid eye make-up during flare-ups.

## When to seek further medical help

- The eye becomes very red or painful,
- Vision becomes reduced or more blurred,
- There is swelling around the eye or fever,
- Symptoms persist despite regular treatment,
- Your child becomes sensitive to light.

## Important information

- If your child wears contact lenses, remove them before doing lid cleaning. Use cooled boiled tap water or lid-cleaning wipes on the eyelids.
- Never rinse contact lenses or lens cases in tap water and do not re-insert the lenses until the eyes are comfortable.
- The skin on your eyelids is thin and delicate, so make sure warm compress is not too hot such that it could burn the skin.

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Ratified / review date	Feb 2026 / Feb 2029
ID number	37/2507/V1

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