

# Meibomian Glands

## Your meibomian glands play an important role in keeping your eyes healthy.

Meibomian glands are located within your eyelids. Your eye doctor can see them by flipping your eyelids inside-out. They release a clear oil (called meibum) onto your tears through a row of small openings along the edge of your eyelids. This oil keeps the surface of your eyes moist by slowing the evaporation of tears.

To assess the health of your meibomian glands, your eye doctor may press gently on your eyelids to see if the openings are blocked and to check the quality of the oil that comes out.

*If the meibomian glands are not working properly, your eyes may feel dry and uncomfortable.*

Based on a report from  
the Tear Film & Ocular  
Surface Society

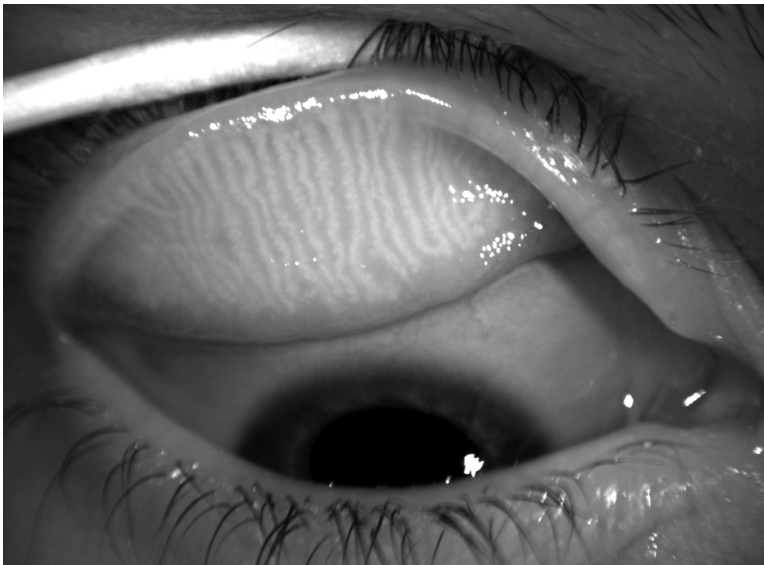


### Do you have dry uncomfortable eyes?

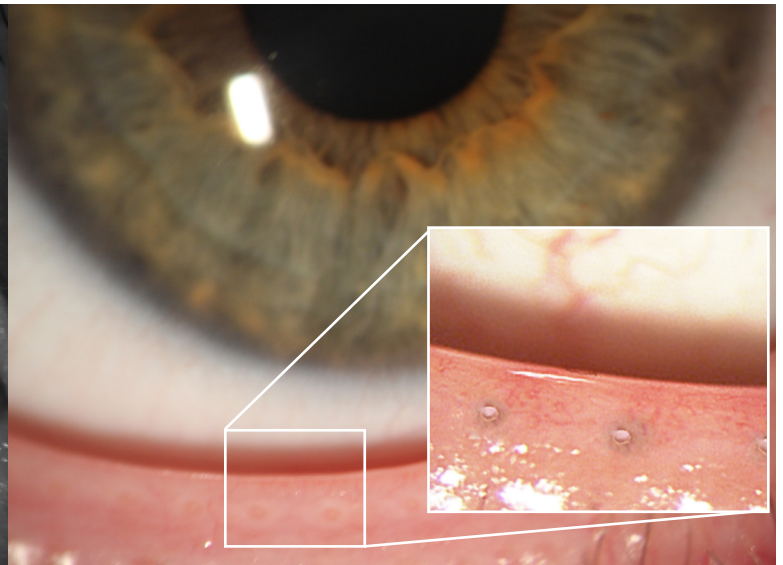
The following changes in your meibomian glands results in a condition called "meibomian gland dysfunction" (MGD).

- The skin lining the small openings may thicken due to aging, medication use, contact lens wear, hormones, or certain types of skin conditions. This thicker skin may block the openings and trap meibum inside.
- The glands may not produce enough meibum (due to aging or medications).
- The glands may produce too much meibum (due to certain types of skin conditions).
- The presence of bacteria can change the quality of the meibum, creating a frothy appearance on the surface of your tear film.

MGD can have an impact on the quality of your tears, causing dryness, discomfort and inflammation around the eyelids.



This is a picture of the underside of the upper eye lid, flipped over and viewed with a special instrument. Healthy meibomian glands are long and narrow.



Clear oil is released through a row of many small openings along the edge of each upper and lower eyelid.

**There is no quick cure for MGD**, but your eye doctor may advise you to try one or more of the following treatments that can help to improve the health of your glands and relieve discomfort – if you apply them on a regular basis.

**Your eye care practitioner has recommended the following:**

- ☐ **Avoid dusty and windy environments, where possible. Consider humidifying indoor spaces.** Dust, wind and a dry environment can worsen the discomfort caused by MGD.
- ☐ **Take omega-3 fatty acids to decrease inflammation and help with dry eyes.** Foods such as walnuts, salmon, tuna and ground flax seed are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. You can also take supplements.
- ☐ **Apply warm compresses in the morning and before bed, to melt and release the meibum.** Soak a facecloth in the hot water. Hold the cloth firmly against your closed eyes for 5-15 minutes. Massage your eyelids gently with your fingers. If the facecloth cools, re-wet it with hot water and continue. Your practitioner may recommend a commercial product.

*Recommended product:* \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **Use an eyelid cleanser in the morning and before bed, to clear away bacteria on your eyelids.** Spray the prescribed cleanser onto a lint-free cloth or remove a pre-soaked cloth from its packaging. Work the cloth into a lather. Close your eye and wipe the cloth over the lash line on the edge of your upper eyelid. Open your eye, pull your lower eyelid down and gently wipe the cloth across the lash line of your lower eyelid. Be sure to focus your attention on the edge of the eyelids. Your doctor will show you how.

*Recommended product:* \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **Use artificial tears to keep your eyes moistened and lubricated.** Artificial tears can help keep your eyes moistened and lubricated.

*Recommended product:* \_\_\_\_\_

**For more severe MGD, medications may be prescribed.**

**Your eye care practitioner has prescribed the following:**

- ☐ **\*\*Antibiotic medications**, to decrease the amount of bacteria and/or inflammation

Prescribed product: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **\*\*Anti-inflammatory medications**, to ease eyelid redness, swelling and irritation

Prescribed product: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* These medications have side effects. Follow your eye doctor's instructions.**



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