

HOT COMPRESSES AND LID HYGIENE

Hot Compresses

Place a clean wash cloth into hot tap water. Take care not to burn your skin—do not boil water or heat cloth in a microwave oven. Apply the hot compress to both closed eyes _____ times(s) each day for 15 minutes. The first five minutes of the application will loosen material stuck to your eyelashes; after that the heat works to soften the oils allowing them to flow better. As the cloth cools, reheat it in hot water. Use a covered bowl or pot to keep the water hot so that you may move to a place that is more comfortable than the kitchen or the bathroom.

Lid Hygiene

After hot soaking, remove material from your lids by gently scrubbing the upper and lower lid margins (aim for the base of your eyelashes) with a moist Q-tip, a wet washcloth, or a pre-moistened eye scrub pad (these pads are available at the pharmacy **without** a prescription). Gently pull the eyelid away from the eye. Try to look away from the eyelid you are cleansing – i.e., if you are cleaning the **upper** lid then look **down**.

Use side-to-side motion to loosen the material caught in the lashes. Complete the cleaning session by smoothly sweeping in one direction to remove debris.

Note: Perform eyelid compresses and cleaning before applying any eye medications.

Limit Environmental Exposure

As much as possible, avoid any air currents or irritants which may further dry out your eyes. (For example: air vents in the home or car; fans – especially over the bed at night; avoid smoke and dusty situations.)

Consider wearing eye protection when outside, and on windy days be particularly careful. Remember to keep blinking when reading or doing any near vision tasks. It is normal that we all blink less frequently at these times.

You may also wish to consider a humidifier to increase moisture in your home in the living room or family room in the evening or the bedroom at night.