Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD)

Are you suffering from dry, irritated, sticky, burning or watery eyes; then you may have meibomian gland dysfunction. 86% of people with dry eye have this common eye problem and it is important that correct treatment is undertaken to restore the eyes’ health.

What is Meibomian Gland Dysfunction?
The lids contain numerous meibomian glands that secrete oils into your tear film. These oils prevent evaporation of your tears, as well as forming a smooth and lubricated surface for clear vision. MGD occurs when these glands are not working properly. The oily secretions produced are of poor quality or the glands become blocked and atrophied.

How is it treated?
There are a number of ways in which MGD can be treated. It is best however, to use a combination of these methods in order to control and manage your MGD.

1. **Warm compress therapy:** Warm compress therapy is a technique designed to unblock the meibomian glands, restoring them to normal health. This needs to be done at least once (though preferably twice) a day. Rest a heat pack over the eyelids for a few minutes. This will ‘melt’ the oils and help unblock the glands. With your finger or warm washer, gently massage the upper and lower lids in the direction towards your eye. Repeat this procedure a couple of times; ensuring the washer or heat pack remains warm.

2. **Lid scrubs:** If associated with blepharitis (inflammation of the eyelids), lid scrubs, such as SteriLid or LidCare will need to be used to clean the lid margins of infection and debris.

3. **Bicarbonate of soda eyewash:** An eye bath of 1 teaspoon bicarb soda in half litre of boiled water, which is to be kept in refrigerator in clean screw top container and replaced every second week. The eyewash can be used with either an eye bath, cottonwool or cotton buds. The refrigerated solution must be kept clean and therefore a portion of the solution should be tipped into a clean glass each day with the remainder being kept refrigerated in screw top bottle.

4. **OptiMel Manuka Honey:** Applying antibacterial manuka honey to the lid margins twice a day with a cotton bud kills and prevents accumulation of bacteria along the lid margin. This will minimise the severity of the condition and reduce symptoms.

5. **Ocular lubricants (artificial tear supplement):** These drops ensure there is a sufficient coating of tears across the eye, preventing further dryness complications.

6. **Omega 3 and Flaxseed oils:** In addition to other health benefits, flaxseed oil and Omega-3 fatty acids (2000mg/day) will improve the quality of the meibomian gland secretions.

Strict compliance with a lid care regime is crucial. It may however still take 1-2 weeks before an improvement is noticed. Symptoms will return if treatment is ceased.