



# Bleb related infection

## **Introduction: what is a bleb related infection?**

You will most likely be reading this leaflet following your trabeculectomy surgery, where a 'bleb' was created in the white part of your eye under the upper eyelid. A bleb is a trap-door that allows fluid to drain out of the eye to reduce the pressure inside the eye, which in turn helps treat your glaucoma.

Sometimes, infection can occur at the place you were operated on. There are two main types of infection, called 'blebitis' and 'bleb related endophthalmitis'. Blebitis is an infection which just affects the bleb, and 'bleb related endophthalmitis' is when the infection spreads into the eye. This second type of infection is far more severe than blebitis and can cause blindness if not treated quickly.

## **Frequently asked questions: How common are these infections?**

Bleb related infection is quite an uncommon condition, occurring in about one to five people out of every 100 people who have trabeculectomy surgery in a given year.

## **What are the causes for getting a bleb related infection?**

There are various factors which can cause this, which include having a bleb leak, suffering from conjunctivitis or blepharitis, wearing contact lenses, having a previous bleb related infection, having had a second operation on the bleb, using antibiotics, and having diabetes.

## **What is the treatment for bleb related infection?**

This depends on what type of infection you have. If you have blebitis, you will be admitted to Moorfields and given a combination of antibiotic steroid eye drops. You will also be given antibiotics to take by mouth. If you have bleb related endophthalmitis, you will be given the same treatment, but you will also be given injections of antibiotics and a steroid into the eye, and steroid tablets to be taken by mouth.

## **What steps can I take to prevent a bleb related infection?**

If you suffer from dry crusty eyelid margins, blepharitis, eye infections or dry eye, these need to be treated and be kept under control with regular treatment and reviews by your ophthalmologist. We also advise you do not rub your eye or touch the bleb to reduce infection.

## What are the symptoms of infection?

Common symptoms include eye pain, redness of the eye, reduced vision, pain when looking into light and discharge coming out from the eye.

## What do I do if I have any of these symptoms?

If you experience any of these symptoms, please go straight to your local A&E department, or Moorfields A&E department in City Road, which is open 24/7 (for emergency eye problems only).

We strongly advise you seek medical help, as bleb related endophthalmitis can cause the eye to go irreversibly blind in a short period of time. In the long term, infection can cause failure of the glaucoma surgery.

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## Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm

Saturday, 9am-5pm

Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

## Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325

Email: [moorfields.pals@nhs.net](mailto:moorfields.pals@nhs.net)

Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

## Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit [www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs](http://www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs)

