

Meibomian Gland Expression (MGE) In-Office Treatment

What are Meibomian Glands?

The meibomian glands are oil glands that line the edge of the eyelids, right next to the eyelashes. These glands make oil that is an important part of the eye's tears. The oil helps keep the tears from evaporating too quickly.

What will I feel if my Meibomian Glands aren't working properly?

Symptoms of Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD) include eye irritation and inflammation (including redness), and dryness. In addition, obstruction or infection of the meibomian glands can cause styes (a tender red swollen bump along the eyelid margin). In many cases, meibomian gland dysfunction is a chronic condition, not a short-term problem with a quick fix.

How come I developed a problem with my meibomian glands?

There are many reasons people can develop MGD, and it's not always clear what the specific cause is for each patient. We do know that MGD can be associated with several different factors. The most common factors are chronic blepharitis, aging, contact lens wear, eyelid tattooing, and demodex (a mite that lives in eyelash follicles). Some medications and diseases – the acne medication Isotretinoin, antihistamines, antidepressants, hormone replacement therapy, Sjogren's syndrome, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, and polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) – are linked as well. A lack of omega-3 fatty acids in the diet has also been associated with MGD.

How is MGD treated?

The classic treatment for MGD is warm compresses at home and eyelid hygiene. However, eye doctors can attest that warm compresses at home have a wide degree of variability in effectiveness. We now offer an in-office treatment, Meibomian Gland Expression. With in-office MGE, 10-15 minutes of sustained, targeted heat is applied right where it is needed, followed by manual expression of the meibomian glands by your eye doctor. Using the microscope, your doctor can apply pressure in just the right locations and see the effectiveness of the expression. In many cases – especially for people with moderate or severe symptoms – a series of three sessions of in-office MGE is needed to see good results. Then single touch-up sessions can be performed as needed, tailored to your symptoms.

What is the cost of the MGE in-office treatment?

MGE is an out-of-pocket expense, not covered by your medical or vision insurance plan. We offer a single session for \$200, or a series of three sessions 3-4 weeks apart for \$545. These visits will be for your in-office treatment only, scheduled separately from eye exams or medical eyecare visits.

Does this treatment replace warm compresses at home?

A good metaphor for the in-office MGE treatment is seeing your dentist for more extensive cleaning of your teeth and gums. The in-office cleaning treatment is more thorough than the home treatment but doesn't replace brushing your teeth. In the same way, it is important to continue doing daily eyelid hygiene and at home heat therapy with a mask or other product that provides 6-10 minutes of sustained heat. In some cases, your doctor may recommend additional treatments such as supplementing with Omega-3s or prescription eyedrops, ointments or oral medicines

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