

EYELID "TWITCHES"

There are four types of eyelid "twitches" that may occur: Benign Eyelid Twitch, Blepharospasm, Hemifacial Spasm, and eyelid Myokymia. The most common of these is

BENIGN EYELID TWITCH.

Most frequently, only one eye is involved (usually the lower eyelid more than the upper). The twitch may follow injury or trauma to the affected side of the face, or it may develop spontaneously without any prior incident. The twitch is made worse by stress or fatigue and generally disappears during sleep.

Although Benign Eyelid Twitch is annoying, it is not dangerous. It is episodic, coming and going and lasting anywhere from seconds to hours. Eventually, it will go away completely, although this may take days to years. Some people find that massaging the muscles around the eyelids helps to relieve the twitch. Others find that warm or cold compresses are helpful. In some people, medications of the benzodiazepene class may help. If you are interested in trying some of these medicines, you should contact your primary care physician.

Alternatively, a medication can be injected into the muscle that will temporarily weaken it for a number of months. If the twitch persists, let us know, so we may further explain this treatment.

Sometimes, some of the more rare eyelid "twitch" syndromes may first appear to be Benign Eyelid Twitch. If any of the following occur, you should re-consult your eye doctor to reconsider your diagnosis:

- Both eyes develop the "twitch"
- The "twitch" progresses to include the cheek, mouth, jaw, or neck
- The eyelid movements become more "writhing" and less jerky
- The "twitch" persists during sleep
- You develop difficulty with swallowing or speech

Remember, Benign Eyelid Twitch is a common problem that is not harmful to the eye. Eventually it will go away by itself. Although it may feel very obvious, unless attention is specifically drawn to it, it is usually not very noticeable to other people.