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Eyelid twitch

An eyelid twitch is a general term for spasms of the eyelid muscles. These spasms happen without your control. The eyelid may repeatedly close (or nearly close) and reopen. This article discusses eyelid twitches in general.

Causes

The most common things that make the muscle in your eyelid twitch are fatigue, stress, caffeine, and excessive alcohol intake. Rarely, they can be a side effect of a medicine used for migraine headaches. Once spasms begin, they may continue off and on for a few days. Then, they disappear. Most people have this type of eyelid twitch once in a while and find it very annoying. In most cases, you won't even notice when the twitch has stopped.

You may have more severe contractions, where the eyelid completely closes. This form of eyelid twitching is called blepharospasm. It lasts much longer than the more common type of eyelid twitch. It is often very uncomfortable and may cause your eyelids to close completely. Twitching can be caused by irritation of the:

- Surface of the eye (cornea)
- Membranes lining the eyelids (conjunctiva)

Sometimes, the reason your eyelid is twitching cannot be found.

Symptoms

Common symptoms of eyelid twitch are:

- Repeated uncontrollable twitching or spasms of your eyelid (most often the upper lid)
- Light sensitivity (sometimes, this is the cause of the twitching)
- Blurry vision (sometimes)

Treatment

Eyelid twitching most often goes away without treatment. In the meantime, the following steps may help:

- Get more sleep.
- Drink less caffeine.
- Consume less alcohol.
- Lubricate your eyes with eye drops.

If twitching is severe or lasts a long time, small injections of botulinum toxin can control the spasms. In rare cases of severe blepharospasm, limited removal of some of the muscles around the eyelids or brain surgery may be helpful.

Outlook (Prognosis)

The outlook depends on the specific type or cause of eyelid twitch. In most cases, the twitches stop within a week.

Possible Complications

There could be some loss of vision if the eyelid twitch is due to an undetected injury. This occurs rarely.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Make an appointment with your primary care provider or eye doctor (ophthalmologist or optometrist) if:

- Eyelid twitching does not go away within 1 week
- Twitching completely closes your eyelid
- Twitching involves other parts of your face
- You have redness, swelling, or a discharge from your eye
- Your upper eyelid is drooping

Alternative Names

Eyelid spasm; Eye twitch; Twitch - eyelid; Blepharospasm; Myokymia

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Updated by: Audrey Tai, DO, MS, Athena Eye Care, Mission Viejo, CA. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

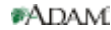
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