



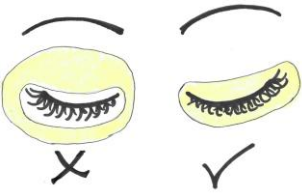
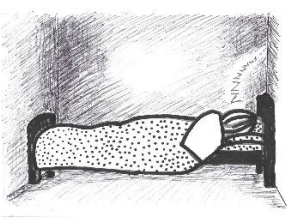





How to Apply Petroleum Jelly – Information Sheet (updated 22/1/26)

This information is to aid discussion between patients and their GP, optometrist, ophthalmologist or pharmacist, so that the treatment can be agreed and monitored. For further advice, please contact your healthcare provider. This treatment is based on experience and understanding how it works, but it has not yet been formally tested.¹

This treatment is for symptoms of dry eye syndrome & blepharitis, which may include gritty, itching or burning feelings and finding crusts or flakes, like dandruff, in the eyelashes. It may also help with a blocked or runny nose. Please read the whole leaflet carefully, and keep it safely so you can read it again. You can use a tube of white or yellow soft paraffin or petroleum jelly, or a new tub. A brand name is Vaseline®, which is the same thing.

<p>1. Get ready for bed.</p> 	<p>Last thing at night, get completely ready for bed. Remove any makeup or contact lenses and wash your face. When you are ready to sleep, go to step 2.</p>	<p>2. Wash your hands.</p> 	<p>Wash your hands carefully using soap or antibacterial handwash and warm water. Dry them well.</p>
<p>3. Measure it out.</p> 	<p>Squeeze out the jelly in a line onto your clean finger, stretching from the tip to the first joint. If you have a tub, scoop out a blob the size of a large pea. Don't use less than this, but you can use more.</p>	<p>4. Apply the petroleum jelly.</p> 	<p>Shut your eye and massage the jelly gently into all the eyelash roots using your finger. Leave a thick layer so that your lashes feel sticky.</p> <p>Repeat steps 3 & 4 for the other eye.</p>
<p>5. Cover the top and bottom lashes fully.</p> 	<p>Your eyelashes should feel sticky if you try to open your eyes. If any jelly does get into your eyes, don't worry, it won't harm them and will clear overnight.</p>	<p>6. Put the lights off and go to sleep.</p> 	<p>The room should be dark or almost dark. Go to sleep without removing the jelly.</p>
<p>7. Wash it off in the morning.</p> 	<p>The best way to remove any remaining jelly is to wipe it off with a clean tissue, then wash your face with your normal soap or facewash and warm water. Using a clean face flannel will help to remove it.</p>	<p>8. Do this for 28 nights.</p> 	<p>Repeat this process every night for 28 nights. Try not to miss a night. If you do, don't worry, just carry on the following night. Make a note of any nights missed. You don't need to do it during the day.</p>
	<p>PLEASE NOTE:</p> <p>It is very unlikely that this treatment will make your eye condition worse. However, if you develop eye pain, increased redness, infection or new eye symptoms, stop treatment and seek urgent advice. See the next page for how to manage any initial minor side effects, including skin tingling or itching.</p>		

How the treatment works:

It is possible that your eye symptoms are being caused or made worse by *Demodex* mites - tiny creatures, closely related to house dust mites, which are too small to see without a microscope. They live, hidden away, in our eyelash roots and in sweat glands. We all have them, but their numbers increase with our age, poor health, hormonal changes, medicines which reduce our immune response, or even just not washing regularly with soap or bodywash and shampoo. We know they can cause blepharitis symptoms and possibly some other allergies. It is thought we can reduce the number of mites by putting petroleum jelly on our eyelashes at bedtime, because the males come out when it is dark, to find mates. The sticky jelly traps them and stops them from moving. If we do this carefully, every night for a month, any eggs, which would not be harmed by being covered with the jelly, have time to hatch and become adults which can then also be trapped when they try to move around at night.

Other things you can do to help the treatment to work:

- The secret of success is to use enough petroleum jelly to trap the mites and stop them moving, so apply it quite thickly and leave it on overnight. Make your bedroom as dark as you can, provided you are comfortable and it is safe for you to do that.
- Wash your bed linen and towels regularly at a high temperature to kill the mites and remove their remains. Any jelly which does get on your pillowcase should wash off using the warm cycle on your washing machine, but you may prefer to use older bed linen, just in case.
- Don't share towels with family members. Put on clean clothes when you have had a bath or shower.
- If you wear eye makeup, always remove it carefully every night and replace old items of makeup if you can. If you have very irritated eyes, try not to wear makeup, or use contact lenses, until your symptoms have improved.
- If your eyes feel at all dry in the morning, a drop of your usual tear replacement eye drops should ease this feeling.
- On rare occasions, a tingling, prickling or stinging sensation may occur on the face when starting treatment. This may be a sign that the treatment is working to trap the mites and they are reacting. If this occurs, wipe it all off with a tissue and wash your face and eye areas with warm water, and your normal facewash on a clean flannel. Dry your face then reapply the jelly and go back to bed. You may find you need to do this more than once before it resolves.
- After your first course of treatment, symptoms could return in the future, because *Demodex* have a habit of coming back. If they do, you can repeat the treatment as much as you like, or use it every other night, or twice a week, to keep them away.

Possible Unwanted Effects & Warnings:

- Petroleum jelly is a pure, unreactive, substance used in many eye ointments. It has no added chemicals or medicines, so direct, harmful effects are very unlikely. However, *Demodex* are also linked with some skin problems, including acne, rosacea, and other itchy skin conditions, so a flare-up or other change at the start of treatment is possible. Do not use this treatment if you have a moderate or severe skin condition, as there is a risk of it getting worse, especially at first, though it may also improve. Seek advice from your GP, eye or skin specialist, or pharmacist if you get a bad reaction and show them this leaflet as they may not know about *Demodex*.
- See the advice above on how to deal with mild tingling or prickling sensations at the start of treatment.
- If the jelly does get in your eyes, it will clear naturally overnight. In case of any temporary blurring, don't drive or use dangerous items until it clears.
- Remove contact lenses, if you use them, before applying the treatment. It may be difficult to wear your lenses during this treatment, unless they are a type that you can clean without damaging them. Ask your optometrist for advice.
- Petroleum jelly is classed as non-flammable, and is unlikely to get on your bed clothes, but some skin treatments are thought to make fabric burn even faster than normal. Avoid any risk – don't ever use candles, cigarettes, or other fire sources, anywhere near your night clothes or bedding, which should be washed frequently.

If you develop eye pain, increased redness, infection, or new eye symptoms, during this treatment, seek urgent advice. If you develop an allergic-type reaction seek medical help. In emergency, such as difficulty breathing or fainting, call an ambulance. Patients may report side effects of any medicine using the "Yellow Card" scheme at: www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard.

Storage: Keep your petroleum jelly in a cool place. By the side of your bed is fine, but not near a radiator as it may become too runny to work properly. Keep it out of the reach of small children.

Disclaimer: This treatment is not a licensed medicine and is awaiting formal testing in clinical trials. Information included has been gathered from anecdotal reports, some published evidence from a small number of clinicians who regularly recommend it, and from published literature on current treatments for blepharitis and dry eye conditions. Please read and observe the warnings carefully. Advice from your own healthcare professional should be obtained before using this treatment, to ensure it is clinically appropriate for you. To the extent legally permissible, the author disclaims any responsibility for damages and any liability whatsoever arising out of the use, the non-use, or incorrect use of this treatment. Please contact your own healthcare provider for further advice.

1. Senior-Fletcher Diana E. Reducing ocular Demodex using petroleum jelly may alleviate dry eye syndrome, blepharitis, facial dermatoses, ocular and respiratory allergies, and decrease associated prescribing: a hypothesis. *Frontiers in Allergy* 2025
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/allergy/articles/10.3389/falgy.2025.1576102/full>