

# Natural Help 4...

# Episcleritis



## What is Episcleritis?

Episcleritis is an inflammatory condition of the **episclera** (the connective tissue between the conjunctiva and sclera in the eye). This type of eye inflammation, while bothersome and mildly uncomfortable, **usually looks worse than it is and is usually not considered serious**. In fact, episcleritis usually disappears within 1 to 2 weeks without any medical treatment.

Statistically, **women are more affected by episcleritis** than men, and it characteristically occurs in people who are in their 30's and 40's. **Episcleritis can sometimes develop into a recurrent problem**, and in rare cases, may even develop into scleritis.

## Diagnosing Episcleritis

Episcleritis is diagnosed with a slit lamp (a microscope with a light attached that has been specifically designed for eye examinations). This is usually done by an optometrist and some general practitioners.

Your doctor will be on the look out for any discharge and pain and will have to **rule out other eye inflammatory conditions**, such as scleritis, which can be more serious.

## What are the Symptoms of Episcleritis?

The **symptoms of episcleritis** are generally mild, with acute redness being the predominant symptom. This red appearance of the “white part” of the eye makes episcleritis look similar to conjunctivitis (pink eye), but there is generally no discharge or tearing. If pain, tenderness or discomfort does occur, it is usually mild and manageable.

## What Causes Episcleritis?

**Causes of episcleritis infection** have not been established. In some cases, the **causes of episcleritis infection can be related to another inflammatory condition** such as arthritis, lupus, and inflammatory bowel disease. Other **causes of episcleritis** include underlying conditions such as gout, herpes simplex infection, rosacea, and tuberculosis.

## Help for Episcleritis

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**Episcleritis** is generally a mild condition and tends to disappear on its own without further intervention. **Episcleritis infection treatment** is then done with over-the-counter saline solutions if discomfort or pain are present. The solutions can be chilled and used to soothe the inflamed area.

In more severe cases, **episcleritis infection treatment** may include mild steroids and/or anti-inflammatory medications prescribed by your doctor. Make sure you are aware of all the side effects of the medication you are prescribed, as some of these can be more troubling than the actual eye condition itself.

## Natural Remedies for Episcleritis

Like many things, **eye health** is not something many people think much about until there is a problem. Luckily, nature supplies us with the **natural ingredients to promote eye health**-- thus helping to alleviate as well as prevent various eye problems.

**Episcleritis infection treatment** can include herbs such as *Aspalathus linearis* (Rooibos) and *Sutherlandia frutescens*, which are powerful anti-oxidants and will help **maintain a healthy supply of blood, oxygen and essential nutrients to the eye**. Another powerful herb commonly used for eye health is *Vaccinium myrtillus* (bilberry) which is used to strengthen eye capillaries, and prevent **eye-related disease and infection** and possible underlying **causes of episcleritis infection**.

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is **not the only treatment option**. Conventional Western medicine (often called allopathic or orthodox medicine) is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools, and many pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available and freely used-- even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that **both have a role to play in the treatment program**.

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who do not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby **providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options** from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself**. While natural medicines are often called



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**Michele Carelse, Clinical  
Psychologist**



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a **unique and independent form of medicine** in their own right, well able to **treat a variety of conditions**. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. This encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a **holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease**. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "...more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to **support health** (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much**, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing**.

In many cases, they can **succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed**. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage** and there is a **wealth of empirical evidence** to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to **support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines**.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines **must be manufactured in the correct way**, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, **not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards**, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘**standardized’ extracts** may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have **grave disadvantages**, including an increase in side effects, as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of

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extraction – which **retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb** as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, **always choose wisely**. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor, in order that your condition may be monitored. **Well-informed and supportive practitioners will support patients** who want to take responsibility for their own health.

## Related Natural Remedies:

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