

STYE AND CHALAZION

What is a styte and a chalazion?

A styte and a chalazion are both lumps in the eyelids and are often difficult to distinguish.



A styte is an infected eyelash follicle at the edge of the eyelid. It is a bacterial infection and can be painful.



A chalazion is when an oil-producing gland in the eyelid, called the meibomian gland, becomes enlarged, blocked and clogged with oil. This is not an infection and is painless.

Who is at risk?

You are at increased risk if;

- have had chalazia or styes previously
- have skin conditions such as acne rosacea or seborrheic dermatitis
- have other systemic medical conditions, such as diabetes
- consistently don't remove eye makeup completely
- use old or contaminated cosmetics.

How is it treated?

Chalazia and styes usually respond well to treatment, disappearing within a few weeks. Some people are prone to recurrences, and the ophthalmologist may want to take a small biopsy (piece of tissue).

1. Warm compresses

Hold a clean facecloth that has been soaked in hot water against the closed lid for 10 - 15 minutes, three to five times a day. You should repeatedly soak the cloth in hot water to maintain adequate heat. The warm compress should allow the clogged gland to open and drain a white or yellow discharge. If the gland opens, gently massage around the styte or chalazion to help drainage.

2. Antibiotic ointments

An antibiotic ointment may be prescribed if bacteria infect a chalazion, or if a styte does not improve after treatment with warm compresses or if it keeps coming back.

3. Steroid injections

A steroid (cortisone) injection is sometimes used to reduce swelling of a chalazion.

4. Surgical removal

If a large chalazion or styte does not heal after other treatments or if it affects your vision, your ophthalmologist may need to drain it in surgery. The procedure is usually performed under local anesthesia in your ophthalmologist's office.

Please note that these are general guidelines. If in doubt, consult your ophthalmologist.