



Stye

What is a chalazion (Stye)

A chalazion is a lump in the middle of the eyelid. The lump slowly gets bigger until it is about 1/2 inch wide. The skin overlying the lump is a normal color or pink. The lump is usually not tender. Your healthcare provider needs to confirm the diagnosis.

What is the cause?

A chalazion is caused by a blockage of a special oil gland called the meibomian gland. The oil gland normally lubricates the inner surface of the eyelid. When the gland is blocked, the oily material builds up and causes a lump in the eyelid. Usually the cause of the blockage is unknown. Sometimes the gland can become blocked by a low grade infection of the eyelid margins. Sometimes crusting of the lid margin can be seen.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Eyelid washes**

Put 2 drops of baby shampoo into a glass of warm water. Wet some cotton balls in the solution and use them to scrub the lid margins for 2 minutes. This should remove any lid margin crusting.

- **Warm compresses and eyelid massage**

The purpose of eyelid massage is to help open the blocked gland. After cleaning the lid margins, put a warm wet cloth on the eyelid for 5 minutes to soften the lump. Then, using your clean finger or a cotton swab, gently massage the swollen area downward towards the edge of the eyelid. Do this for about 1 minute. Repeat this process 2 times a day. Continue this treatment for 1 month.

How long does it last?

If a chalazion is treated within the first month or so, the warm compresses and eyelid massage may reduce the swelling. After the first month, treatment is of little benefit, but the lump may gradually disappear on its own. Occasionally, the blocked gland opens through the inner lining of the eyelid and drains a little pus for a day or so before it heals over.

If the chalazion is large and lasts more than 2 months, it usually needs to be opened and drained by an eye surgeon (an ophthalmologist).

When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call during office hours if:

- The chalazion doesn't get smaller after you have treated it for 1 month with warm compresses and massage.
- The swelling becomes larger.
- The lump persists for more than 2 months.
- The eyelid becomes red and swollen.
- You have other questions or concerns.