

UNIVERSITY STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES • Fact Sheet

CHALAZION**WHAT IS IT?**

A chalazion is a chronic bump in the eyelid that is typically firm, rubbery, and painless. It forms when an oil gland (meibomian gland) within the eyelid becomes blocked and inflamed.

A chalazion is different from a “stye”, which also causes a lump in the eyelid. A stye (or hordeolum) is caused by an infection, is painful, and usually develops rapidly (over the course of about a day). However, a stye that does not resolve may develop into a hard chalazion. A chalazion may also become infected and turn into a stye.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- ❖ A chalazion usually presents as a firm, painless lump in the eyelid that develops over the course of days to weeks. It may be the size of a small bead or grow as large as a pea.
- ❖ The upper eyelid is more commonly affected because it contains more oil glands. If a chalazion forms on the lower eyelid, it can look like a yellow-white bump inside the eyelid.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your medical provider will ask questions about your symptoms and examine your eye. No special testing is needed.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Most chalazia resolve on their own without treatment over weeks to months. Small chalazia often resolve on their own over days to weeks.

- ❖ Warm compresses may help larger lesions drain and resolve faster.
 - Compresses should be applied for at least 10 minutes, 4 times a day. Symptoms usually resolve after a few weeks of treatment.
 - Use either a clean warm washcloth or a ziploc bag filled with warm mashed potatoes.
 - If using a warm washcloth, reheat it with warm water when it cools and continue to apply. Putting the warm washcloth inside a Ziploc bag can also help it retain heat for longer.
 - Patients with recurrent chalazia can apply warm compresses to the eyelids for 5 minutes at bedtime to prevent the oil glands from clogging during the night.
- ❖ Do not wear eye makeup or contact lenses until the chalazion is resolved.
- ❖ Antibiotics are generally not helpful because a chalazion is not caused by an infection.
- ❖ Avoid squeezing or picking at a chalazion as this can lead to a bacterial infection of the eyelid.
- ❖ A referral to an ophthalmologist may be made if the chalazion does not respond to treatment after 1-2 months or is recurrent. The ophthalmologist may take a biopsy of the chalazion to rule out more serious eye problems. Treatment may include a steroid injection into the lesion or surgical removal of the lesion.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- ❖ The lump on your eyelid gets bigger or painful.
- ❖ The redness or swelling spreads to your entire eyelid or other parts of your face.
- ❖ The whites of your eyes become red.
- ❖ Your vision is affected.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES: www.aao.org, www.medicinenet.com