

Chalazion (Stye) Care

Definition: A chalazion is a blocked eyelid oil gland. There are 30 to 40 oil glands deep inside each eyelid. The oil that these glands produce is an important part of the tear film of the eyes. The glands secrete oil through tiny pores at the edges of the eyelids, close to the base of the eyelashes. For a variety of reasons, the oil in these glands can sometimes harden and cause the gland to become blocked. As a result, the gland becomes swollen, painful, and occasionally infected.

Treatment:

- 1) Moist heat is the mainstay of treatment for Chalazions: just as butter will melt when heated up, the hardened oil in the eyelid glands will soften and drain out if enough heat is applied to the eyelids. The best way to apply heat is to use a clean sock filled with uncooked rice. This “Hot Pack” can be heated up in your microwave for about 2 minutes, and then be held against the affected eyelid. Hot packs will allow the chalazion to drain and are important to keep the chalazion from recurring. Perform hot packs three times a day, 10 minutes each time, for 5 days.
- 2) Dr. Hidaji may also prescribe an antibiotic ointment, or more rarely, an oral antibiotic.
- 3) If hot packs and medicines prescribed by the doctor don't help, then surgery on the eyelid may be beneficial. It is best to wait, however, until the redness, pain, and swelling are completely gone before having surgery on a chalazion.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will my chalazion be there?

It is not unusual for the chalazion to last several weeks or even months.

Can you tell me more about the surgery?

The outpatient surgery to treat chalazia involves mild to moderate discomfort. Numbing injections into the eyelid prevent most of the pain involved. These procedures are usually done in the office, and they take about 10 minutes to perform. After the surgery, there may be swelling and bruising of the eyelid which takes about a week to resolve. There are no restrictions after surgery, with the exception that contact lenses shouldn't be worn for two weeks.

How can I tell if the eyelid is getting infected?

While it is normal to have some mucus discharge while a chalazion is healing, thick yellow discharge is unusual and indicates a possible infection. Severe eyelid swelling, fever, or excessive pain are also indicators of infection. If you are developing these signs, please contact Dr. Hidaji at (901)754-3937.