Eyelid Swelling Advice

What is a Common Stye?

The medical name for a common stye is **external hordeolum.**
It is a common painful eyelid problem, where a small abscess forms at the base of an eyelash. This happens quite quickly over a few days and it appears along the edge of the eyelid due to infection in the root (follicle) of an eyelash. It may start off as a small red lump but as it develops into a little abscess (collection of pus), it looks like a yellow pus-filled spot. Other symptoms include a watery eye and a red eye or eyelid.

Common Styes usually occur for no apparent reason. The usual bacterium (germ) that causes the infection is called *Staphylococcus aureus*. This is a common bacterium that is often found on healthy skin, and usually does no harm, but sometimes it invades the skin to cause infections such as boils, abscesses, and common styes. You're also more likely to get a stye if you have long-term Blepharitis.

What is the treatment for a Common stye?

Usually, no treatment is necessary. Once a 'head' has formed on the stye, most burst within 3-4 days, and the tiny amount of pus drains away leaving no further problem.

- A warm compress (a cloth warmed with warm water) held against the closed eyelid encourages the stye to release pus and heal more quickly – see over for how to do this.
- Don’t attempt to puncture a stye yourself
- Take simple analgesic (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen) to relieve pain– this can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Follow the instructions on the packet/bottle carefully.

What is a Chalazion?

These are also called Meibomian cysts.
They happen when a type of gland in the eyelid (Meibomian gland) becomes blocked. They tend to develop farther from the edge of the eyelid than styes.

In some situations, it may be difficult to distinguish between a chalazion and stye.

Antibiotic ointments and medicines are not recommended for the treatment of Common styes and Chalazion routinely.

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
Always wash your hands • Before and after touching the affected eyelid	Don't share face cloths/flannels or towels with anyone
	Don't use eye makeup and avoid using contact lens
	Don't rub your eyes

Are there any complications?

Most common styes clear without any treatment and cause no problems. They do not affect your vision. Very occasionally the infection can spread to the eye causing conjunctivitis, which may need antibiotic ointment to clear the infection. You could see your GP for this.

Most Chalazion resolve spontaneously, although this may take weeks (at times up to few months). If the Chalazion does not improve or resolve after 4 weeks with conservative treatment, a referral to an ophthalmologist might be needed. Kindly follow up with your GP.

Occasionally the eyelids can become red and swollen. You should see your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University hospital (not Minor injury unit) for further assessment if this happens <u>immediately</u>.

Warm compresses (for both Common stye and chalazion)

Warm compresses help to clear the clogged gland.

- Boil some water and let it cool a little or use water from the hot tap.
- Soak cotton wool or a clean flannel in the warm (but not boiling) water, squeeze it out
- Gently press this onto your closed eyelids for 5-10 minutes at a time.
- Do these 3 to 4 times a day until the stye or chalazion is gone.
- You should repeatedly soak the cloth in hot water to keep it warm. The warm compress should allow the clogged gland to open and drain white or yellow discharge.

If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287
Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056
Nevil Hall Hospital: 01873 732073
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

For a Chalazion: After application of the warm compress, gently massage the chalazion in the direction of the eyelashes to express the contents. Starting at the skin crease and using clean fingers or a cotton bud, gently massage the upper lid downwards to the lashes. The lower lid should be massaged upwards towards the lashes.

If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.

References:

Scenario: Management | Management | Styes (hordeola) | CKS | NICE
Stye - NHS
Scenario: Management | Management | Meibomian cyst (chalazion) | CKS | NICE

This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg