

# CHALAZION

## What is a chalazion?

The term chalazion comes from a Greek word meaning a small lump. It refers to a swelling in the eyelid caused by inflammation of one of the small oil producing glands (meibomian glands) located in the upper and lower eyelids.

A chalazion is sometimes confused with a sty, which also appears as a lump in the eyelid. A sty is an infection of a lash follicle that forms a red, sore lump near the edge of the eyelid.

A chalazion is an inflammatory reaction of trapped oil secretions. It is not caused by bacteria, although the site can become infected by bacteria.

Chalazions tend to occur further from the edge of the eyelid than styes and tend to "point" toward the inside of the eyelid.

Sometimes a chalazion can cause the entire eyelid to swell suddenly, but usually there is a definite tender point.

## How is a chalazion treated?

When a chalazion is small and without symptoms, it may disappear on its own. If the chalazion is large, it may cause blurred vision.

Chalazions are treated with any or a combination of the following methods:

1. Warm compresses can be applied in a variety of ways. The simplest way is to hold a clean washcloth, soaked in hot water, against the closed lid. Do this for five to ten minutes, three or four times a day. Repeatedly soak the washcloth in hot water to maintain adequate heat. The majority of chalazions will disappear within a few weeks.

2. Most chalazions need to be surgically drained or they tend to keep recurring. This is carried out in The Eye Hospital Theatre.

3. Other treatments such as steroid injections or long term antibiotics are occasionally used if recurrences occur.

Chalazions usually respond well to treatment, although some people are prone to recurrences. If a chalazion recurs in the same place, your ophthalmologist may suggest a biopsy to rule out more serious problems.