A chalazion is a small lump in the eyelid caused by an obstruction of an oil producing (Zeis or meibomian) gland inside the eyelid. This may occur in the upper or lower eyelid. It is often red, tender, and swollen.

When the gland is obstructed, the oil builds up and forms a lump in the eyelid. Typically, this lump grows over days to weeks. Eventually, the gland ruptures (breaks open) and releases the oil into the tissue of the eyelid, causing inflammation (swelling, redness, pain, and/or warmth). An inflamed chalazion may also be called an “internal hordeolum.”

An external hordeolum, or “sty,” is an inflamed eyelash follicle or lid-margin tear gland. Neither condition is contagious.

TREATMENT FOR CHALAZION

Treatment of the chalazion may include the following:

- Application of warm compresses for about 15 minutes, 2-4 times a day, to reduce swelling
- Light massaging of the area several times a day
- A prescription for antibiotic eye drops or ointments if a bacterial infection is suspected to be the cause
- Do not “pop” or scratch the chalazion

If the chalazion does not resolve after these measures, your McKinley provider may refer you for treatment by an ophthalmologist (a medical doctor who specializes in eye care and surgery).

You should contact your provider immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Fever
- Headache
- Any visual changes (e.g. blurred vision, decreased ability to see)
- Eye pain or drainage
- Extensive swelling or redness
- If both the upper and lower eyelid of one eye is swollen
- If both eyes are swollen

References:


If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu