GENERAL INFORMATION

- A hordeolum is an acute inflammation of the eyelid which can occur either externally or internally. An internal hordeolum is an inflamed meibomian gland just under the lining of the eyelid (palpebral conjunctiva). (The initial swelling and redness may resolve, and the lesion may then become a firm nodule called a chalazion. See “Chalazion”.)
- An external hordeolum, often called a sty, arises from an eyelash follicle or tear gland.
- They are generally not contagious or a sign of cancer.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Redness, swelling, and pain in a localized area of the eyelid, at the base of the lashes or on the inside of the lid.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

An examination of the eye generally confirms this infection.

To facilitate drainage and reduce pain, a folded clean cloth can be used as a compress. The compress should be dipped in warm water, wrung out until just a little dripping remains, and applied to the eye. Dip the folded cloth repeatedly to keep the compress wet and warm. Continue the application of the compresses for 10-15 minutes. Using a clean cloth each time, apply the warm compresses four times a day for three to four days.

Do not use any medicine (including over-the-counter remedies) without checking with your health care provider. Your health care provider might prescribe antibiotic eye drops/ointment. Carefully follow the instructions of your health care provider.

If a hordeolum does not drain spontaneously with compress application, or is not resolving after several days, visit your health care provider for assistance. Do not attempt to squeeze or drain the sty yourself. This will increase inflammation and may cause cellulitis, a serious complication.

If you develop any of these symptoms, seek care as soon as possible:

- Fever
- Change in vision
- Severe headache
- Swelling of both lids of one eye, or of both eyes
- Nausea/vomiting

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