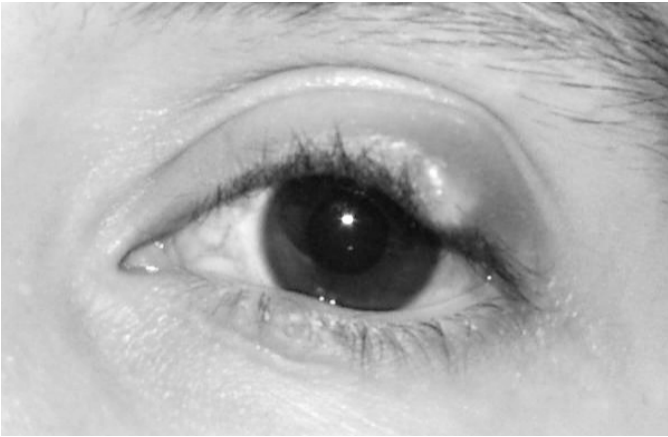


## Information for patients MEIBOMIAN CYST (CHALAZION)



### What is a Meibomian Cyst / Chalazion?

There are about 40 oil secreting meibomian glands in both your upper and lower eyelids. The tiny openings of these glands lie along your eyelid margins, just behind your eyelashes. Their secretions contribute the oily component of the tear film which keeps your eye wetted and vision clear.

If one of these glands or their ducts becomes blocked the gland will swell up with excess secretions. This produces a hard, round, pea-sized lump. If this becomes infected, forming an abscess, the lump becomes red and tender to touch, and may produce a sticky discharge.

The natural history for meibomian cysts is very variable. Some simply resolve, some burst through the front or back of the eyelid and resolve, some burst but grumble-on, others form hard stable lumps and other become infected abscesses.

### How to treat a non-infected meibomian cyst?

#### Hot compress bathing:

Perform the following at least twice daily:

1. Boil some water, place in a clean bowl and allow it to cool to hand hot temperature (taking care not to burn your eyelid).
2. Dip a cotton wool ball or similar into the water, close your eye and gently press on affected gland, for about a minute.
3. Then gently massage the gland with a clean finger.
4. Then apply antibiotic ointment if one has been prescribed.

### **How long will the cyst take to resolve?**

It may take 2-3 of weeks for the swelling to settle but the cyst may persist and if it is non-resolving, “grumbling” or large and annoying, a minor-operation can be performed under a local anaesthetic to drain it.

If in spite of your best efforts your meibomian cyst continues to cause symptoms or you just want the cyst drained, contact your general practitioner who can refer you to an eye doctor.

### **Infected meibomian cysts.**

If your meibomian cyst appears to have become infected, e.g. sudden onset of pain / tenderness and redness associated with marked swelling of the lump or eyelid, you should seek urgent medical attention from your general practitioner or local eye emergency clinic where oral antibiotics may be prescribed.

### **Recurrent meibomian cysts.**

Some people are susceptible to recurrent meibomian cysts, particularly if they suffer from blepharitis (inflammation of the eyelid), or are diabetic. If this is the case, cleaning the eyelid margins on a daily basis as described below, may be of benefit.

### **How to prevent recurrent meibomian cysts?**

#### **Eyelid margin hygiene**

Perform once or twice daily indefinitely:

1. Make a solution of 1 teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate (from the chemist) dissolved in 1 cup of **cooled** boiled water.
2. Dip one end of a clean cotton-bud in the solution and then carefully but firmly, rub the end along your eyelid margin through the **roots** of your eyelashes (where the eyelashes come of the eyelid) using a side-to-side motion. Do this until any flakes, crusts, oily debris have been removed.
3. **IF** an ointment has been prescribed squirt a small amount onto a fingertip and rub it thoroughly into the **roots** of the eyelashes. If an ointment has not been supplied, Vaseline can be applied in the same manner, this will soften any eyelid debris and soothe the eyelid.

Take care when cleaning the eyelashes and applying any ointment to ensure that the eye is not touched.

### **IMPORTANT / PLEASE NOTE:**

Sometimes other more serious lesions can masquerade as meibomian cysts. Therefore, if you have a **progressively enlarging** or **recurrent eyelid lump** or a **recurrence of a lump following a minor operation** to drain a cyst you **MUST** report this to your general practitioner or eye doctor urgently.

### **More information?**

Further information may be obtained from your optician, general practitioner or eye doctor. There are also many online resources but you need to be sure of their legitimacy and impartiality, particularly if proprietary products or treatments are recommended.

The author of this information leaflet has no proprietary interest in any products that are mentioned.