

Additional Notes

Chalazion or Meibomian cyst (Swelling on the eyelid)

The Eye Unit

Information and advice for patients
about Chalazion or Meibomian cyst
(Swelling on the eyelid)

Department opening times:

Monday to Friday: **8am-6pm**

Weekends and bank holidays: **8.30am-6pm**

The Eye Unit, The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
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Review date: **November 2023** Ref: **057/21**

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What is a Meibomian Cyst (chalazion)?

A meibomian cyst or chalazion is seen as a swelling in either the upper or lower eyelid. It is caused by the blockage of a gland, which produces an oily substance, which is present in tears.

Your General Practitioner (GP) can treat this condition.

Will it damage my eyesight?

Meibomian cysts are not harmful to the eye and will not cause any damage to your eyesight. However, swelling of the eyelid or watering can cause temporary blurring of your vision.

The eyelid can become very red, swollen and tender if the cyst becomes infected.

What is the treatment?

This can be treated with heat treatment to the eyelid together with antibiotic eye drops or ointment.

You can apply heat to the eye lid by either using a microwavable heat pad - often called a 'wheat bag' heated to the manufacturers' guide in the microwave OR half filling a hot water bottle with hot water from the tap, not the kettle, to avoid risk. Test the heat of whatever you choose to use onto your skin prior to applying it to the eye lid area. If it is on the hot side, wrap it in a clean tea towel to reduce the temperature. Eye bags can now be purchased from most chemists but it is not necessary if the aforementioned is available.

Make sure you keep your eye closed.

Continue either form of heat treatment for 10-15 minutes, two to three times a day.

Always wash your hands before and after touching your eyes.

How long will it take to get better?

It can take from one week, to three or four months to get better. If the cyst has not gone away in this time you may choose to have a simple operation under a local anaesthetic. However, there is no urgent need to have the operation as most cysts get better eventually.

If your cyst does not go away, see your family doctor and she/he will refer you to us for an operation. We will then send you an appointment, to have the cyst removed.

If you have any problems or questions please ask the doctor, or nurse, caring for you.

For further information and advice please contact:

Emergency Helpline:

0300 019 4181

Mon-Sat: 8am-6pm

Sunday: 8:30am-2pm

and bank holidays: 8:30am-6pm

Remember...

- always wash your hands before and after touching your eye/s
- always finish the course of treatment if you have been prescribed medication, even if your symptoms have improved
- always have regular eye checks with your Optometrist
- always protect your eyes with goggles or glasses when carrying out DIY or using any power equipment
- if you splash anything into your eye always rinse with plenty of tap water and seek medical advice
- never use anyone else's medication (this includes eye-drops)