

Operation for Chalazion or Meibomian Cyst

The Eye Unit Patient Information

This leaflet aims to inform patients who are considering chalazion treatment and can help by answering some common questions.

What is a Chalazion?

A chalazion is a solid pea-sized lump in the upper or lower eyelid. There is no serious risk to the eye, but the lump may cause slight blurring of vision and infection.

What causes a Chalazion?

A chalazion is caused by the blockage in an eyelid gland - Meibomian gland.

What is the treatment and how is it done?

In most cases, these cysts can be managed at home by applying warm compresses with commercial microwaveable eye bags along with eye drops or ointments. The majority of cysts will have disappeared well before 6 months.

Surgical treatment for chalazion may only be carried out on the NHS if certain strict criteria are met and your surgeon will tell you if you are eligible.

You should not drive to the hospital on the day. You will be asked to arrive in good time so there may be a short wait. The treatment may involve a simple injection into the eyelid. Otherwise the lump may be drained from a small incision through the skin or inside of the eyelid following a small numbing injection. The treatment normally takes less than 30 minutes. You may have ointment applied to the wound and an eye pad and you can go home on the same day.

When can I drive and go to work after the operation?

You may start driving and working again as soon as the dressing is removed as long as your vision is clear and you are not light sensitive, but avoid heavy lifting or dirty and dusty environments to reduce the risk of complications.

Are there any risks or side effects?

Serious, significant or frequently occurring risks of surgery are as follows:

- **common (up to 1 in 20)** - recurrence or new chalazion, minor bleeding, bruising, swelling, infection, lump, discomfort, eyelid notch
- **uncommon (up to 1 in 100)** - other e.g. dry eye
- **very rare (up to 1 in 100,000)** - reaction to anaesthetic, severe or permanent vision loss

What to expect after the operation

A dressing will be applied for up to 24 hours. Make sure the area is kept clean and dry. If necessary clean it gently using cooled, boiled water and clean gauze or tissues.

You will be prescribed an eye ointment, which you should apply to the wound as directed, usually twice a day for seven days.

You will experience some degree of swelling and bruising - cold compresses and elevation of the head will help to relieve any discomfort.

Bruising may take three or four weeks to disappear completely, although it can usually be concealed with make-up after seven days.

You can return to work when you wish but if you deal with the public, you may prefer to delay your return for around ten days because of bruising and swelling.

It is important to avoid strenuous activity for the first week after surgery.

Do not swim for four weeks because of the risk of infection.

Avoid heavy lifting, running or strenuous gym work-outs for four weeks or you may exacerbate bruising or swelling.

You should not wear contact lenses for at least two weeks after surgery.

When should I contact the department?

- you have any problems with your vision
- your eye becomes red or painful
- you cannot close your eye properly
- you have bleeding from the wound or a very sticky discharge

Any problems or questions?

For further information and advice please contact:

Eye Emergency Helpline: 0300 019 4181

Mon-Sat: **8am-6pm** Sunday: **8:30am-2pm**. Bank Holidays: **8.30am-6pm**.

**The Eye Unit, The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW**

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t: 01202 303626

w: www.uhd.nhs.uk



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