

Chalazion

There are approximately 30 glands in the upper and lower eyelids that are responsible for producing oil that stabilizes your tear film. These glands are called meibomian glands. The oil produced by meibomian glands protect your tears from evaporating. Occasionally, one of these meibomian glands can become blocked and backfill causing a red swollen lump on your upper or lower eyelid, called a chalazion.

A chalazion is often confused with a sty, which also appears as a lump on your eyelid. However, a sty is an infection of an eyelash and is treated differently. A chalazion is not an infection and therefore does not usually respond to simple antibiotic treatment.

THE TREATMENT FOR A CHALAZION USUALLY STARTS WITH:

1. A warm compress that will heat up the blocked oil gland.
2. Eyelid massage in order to help the blocked gland drain.
3. Occasionally, medication can be used to decrease inflammation and promote drainage of the blocked oil gland.
4. Surgery or a steroid injection may be necessary to treat a chalazion that is not responsive to the above treatment.

Surgery involves giving a local anesthetic and making an incision on the inside of your eyelid to drain the blocked oil gland. Surgery may not always be successful. A chalazion can recur and does not always go away completely.

A chalazion, if left untreated, will usually become smaller, less red, and harder as the gland stops producing oil. An untreated chalazion should not cause vision loss or other problems with the health of your eye. If your symptoms worsen at any time or you have any significant increase in pain or any vision loss, you should be re-evaluated as soon as possible.

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17534 Royalton Road
Strongsville, OH 44136

50 Front Street
Berea, OH 44017

440.238.5030 www.alessioeyemd.com