

Chalazion (meibomian cyst)

This Eye Casualty advice sheet explains what a chalazion is and how it is managed. If you have any queries, please speak to your doctor or nurse.

What is chalazion?

A chalazion is a lump in the eyelid. Chalazia may occur on the upper or lower eyelids and may also be called meibomian or tarsal cysts.

What causes them?

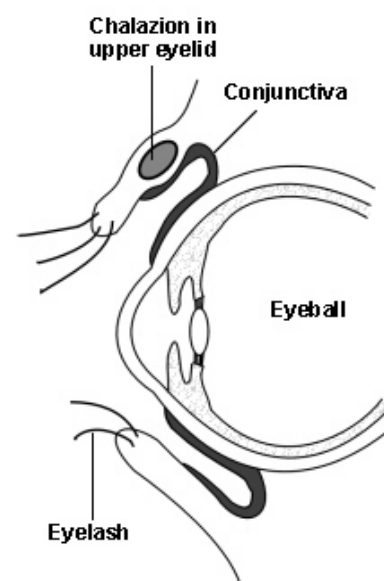
They are fairly common, and are caused by a blockage in the tiny oil-producing glands that help to lubricate the eye.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Raised, swollen lump on the upper or lower eyelid.
- Often red.
- May be tender and sore.
- Occasional blurring of vision although it does not directly affect sight.

What treatment is available?

- No treatment (if the lump is small and is not a nuisance) – chalazia often go away within a few months.
- Hot compresses and massage 3-4 times a day, to reduce swelling.
- Antibiotic ointment may be needed, if the chalazion becomes infected.
- A small operation to remove the lump, if it lasts for many weeks, comes back, or is troublesome. The operation is usually done under local anaesthetic (i.e. you will be awake but the area will be numbed). Funding for this will need to be arranged with your GP prior to the procedure.



Using a hot compress

Hot compresses help to ease irritation and to reduce swelling. We may advise you to use compresses for several weeks.

- Half fill a vacuum flask with boiling water (you must be careful and should never put the boiling water directly on your skin or eye).
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Starting about 15cm (6 inches) away from your face with the affected eye closed; bring the flask towards your eye in order for the steam to warm the eyelid for 3-4 minutes. Take care not to bring the flask too close as steam can scald.
- With the tips of your fingers, gently massage from above/below the affected area, towards the eyelashes.
- If you have been prescribed antibiotic ointment, put about 1cm (1/4 inch) onto the end of a clean cotton bud and gently rub into the eyelashes.
- Repeat this 3-4 times a day for 2-4 weeks or until the symptoms have cleared.

Contacting us

If you have a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist. If urgent, please attend Eye Casualty or call 111.

Eye Casualty (Reading):	Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm; Sat & Sun & bank holidays 9am-12.30pm; Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
Eye Casualty: Prince Charles Eye Unit (Windsor):	Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm; Sat 9am-12.30pm; Closed Sun & bank holidays.
Dorrell Ward (Reading):	0118 322 7172 (24 hours a day)
Eye Day Unit (Reading):	0118 322 7123 (Mon-Fri 7am to 6pm)

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Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Ophthalmology, February 2023.

Next review due: February 2025

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