

CHALAZION

What is a chalazion?

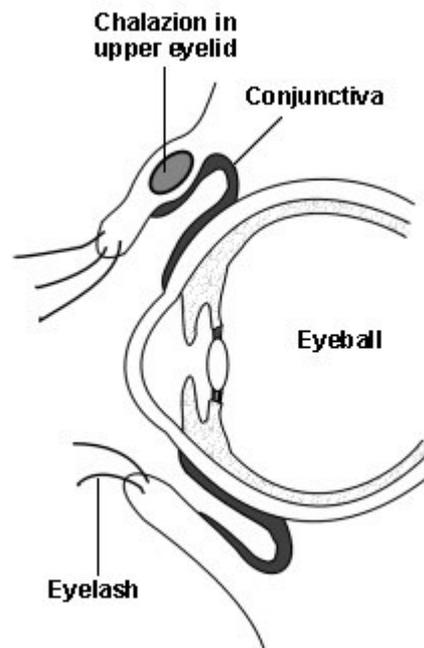
A chalazion is a small cyst (semi-fluid filled swelling) in the eyelid. It is common and sometimes called a meibomian or tarsal cyst.

What causes a chalazion?

There are tiny glands just under the surface of the inner eyelid. These make an oily fluid to help lubricate the eye. If the gland gets blocked then the fluid cannot escape and it may swell into a cyst.

What are the symptoms of a chalazion?

- The usual symptom is a small lump which develops on an eyelid. It might look unsightly.
- Sometimes it causes mild pain or irritation.
- Occasionally it gets infected. It then becomes more swollen and painful.
- Sight is not affected. Rarely it can enlarge to the point that it may block a small part of your field of vision.



What is the treatment for a chalazion?

- **No treatment** may be advised at first. They often just go away within a few months.
- **Hot compresses** help to ease irritation. Hold a flannel that has been in hot water gently but firmly against the closed eye. Sometimes this warmth and slight pressure is enough to release the contents of the cyst, and it is cured. (The water should be hot, but comfortable and not scalding.)
- **Antibiotic drops or tablets** may be needed if it becomes infected.
- **A small operation** is an option if it does not go, or if it causes troublesome symptoms. The operation is done under local anaesthetic. The eyelid is numbed. A small cut is then made on the inside of the eyelid to release the contents of the cyst. It is a minor procedure.

Will it happen again?

For most people a chalazion occurs just once. However, some people are prone to develop them and it may recur. You may be able to prevent it from recurring by using a hot compress on the eyelids (described above) and massaging the eyelids each morning. Antibiotic tablets or drops may reduce the chance of recurrence if taken at the beginning of the infection.