



# Chalazion

## What is a chalazion?

A chalazion is a harmless cyst caused by a blocked meibomian gland in the eyelid. Meibomian glands in the eyelid produce an oil which helps keep the eye moist. If the gland becomes blocked, the oil builds up into a cyst which looks like a small lump in the eyelid. The lump can become irritated and red and, occasionally, infected.

## What causes them?

Lid cysts are common, especially in children. If children develop cysts repeatedly, they could have blepharitis, a long-term mild irritation of the edge of the eyelids, which is usually harmless but occasionally affects the eye.

## Treatment of chalazion

Most cysts disappear with time but can take weeks and sometimes many months, to go. They are normally harmless and can be safely left to get better with time in most cases.

Warm compresses might speed up the disappearance of the cyst. Use clean cotton wool or a clean flannel soaked in very warm water (be sure it's not hot enough to burn). Squeeze out excess water and place the flannel or cotton wool on your child's

closed eyelids over the cyst for two minutes at a time twice daily.

Occasionally, the doctor will prescribe a short course of antibiotic ointment or drops to help any irritation and, if there is infection spreading from the cyst, will prescribe antibiotics by mouth. However, medication does not cause the cysts to disappear.

## Surgical treatment

If there is a large cyst which remains for a long time, it is possible to perform surgery to remove it. In most cases, surgery is not medically necessary but can be done to speed up healing of the cyst. However, surgery is often not recommended because:

- The cyst is harmless and will disappear with time
- Surgery does not prevent another cyst from developing
- There is a 1 in 5 chance the cyst will regrow
- There are rare, but serious risks of surgery such as infection or scarring
- For many children, it requires a general

anaesthetic which carries a small risk to their general health.

Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

### Further check ups

In most cases, your eye doctor will discharge your child straight from A&E.

### What to look out for:

- Increasing redness and soreness of the eye itself
- Very blurred vision

Very noticeable and spreading redness together with a lot of swelling of the eyelid

If you are worried, please call the advice line below or alternatively you can visit A&E for a further examination. If the cyst has been there a long time and you would like your child to be considered for surgery, please ask your GP to refer your child to the clinic.

Author: Paediatric information group  
Revision number: 2  
Approval date: January 2018  
Review date: January 2020

**Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**  
**City Road, London EC1V 2PD**  
**Phone: 020 7253 3411**  
**[www.moorfields.nhs.uk](http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk)**

### Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345  
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm  
Saturday, 9am-5pm

### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325  
Email: [moorfields.pals@nhs.net](mailto:moorfields.pals@nhs.net)  
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

### Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit [www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs](http://www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs)

