

George A. Patterson III, M.D.
8218 Wisconsin Ave Suite 316
Bethesda Md. 20814
Phone 301-652-7061
Fax 301-656-6664
Ophthalmology
www.georgepatterson.eyemd.org

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Chalazion(Stye).

This is caused by a blockage in one or several of the oil glands of the eyelid. Each eyelid has 30-40 oil glands deep inside the lid with tiny tubes leading from the gland to the eyelid edge. For reasons we don't understand the oil become thick and sticky. The oil backs up and causes inflammation of the eyelid. It is not caused by rubbing the eyelid or by makeup or contact lenses or allergies.

Symptoms: Include redness, swelling, mild pain of the eyelid. Often a bump in the lid will appear and they can increase in size.

Natural history. Usually within a few days or weeks the bump will drain with excess discharge on the eyelid edge. In some patients the bump can last for 1-12 months **but they always go away if you wait long enough.**

Treatment:

Hot soaks of the lid are the main treatment. Take a hot water bottle (or gel face mask) and fill it with as hot water as you can stand without burning. Get a wet cloth and place it over your eye and then place the water bottle on top of the cloth. You can place your head on a table to make it easier. Do this for about 5 minutes and then light massage the eye. This can be done 3-4 times a day until the soreness is gone. After two weeks or so the soaks probably are not helpful. An addition/alternative to hot soaks is to let the hot water from the shower run over the closed eyelids.

Ointment: Often a prescription ointment is prescribed to reduce the swelling. Do the hot soaks first and then dry off the eyelid and apply a thin layer to the affected area of the lid. Put the ointment on each time you do the hot soaks.

Surgery. If the bump persists for weeks and is large and is noticeable surgery can be done to drain it. The chalazion will go away on its own and it rarely causes a vision problem so the surgery is not mandatory. The surgery can be done in the office and you can resume most activities (no underwater swimming for a couple days) immediately.

Some patients who have multiple chalazia or recurrent chalazia will be prescribed a tetracycline tablet to take by mouth. The tetracycline will work to prevent chalazion but may not help to reduce a chalazion that is already present.