

Styes, meibomian cysts and hot compresses

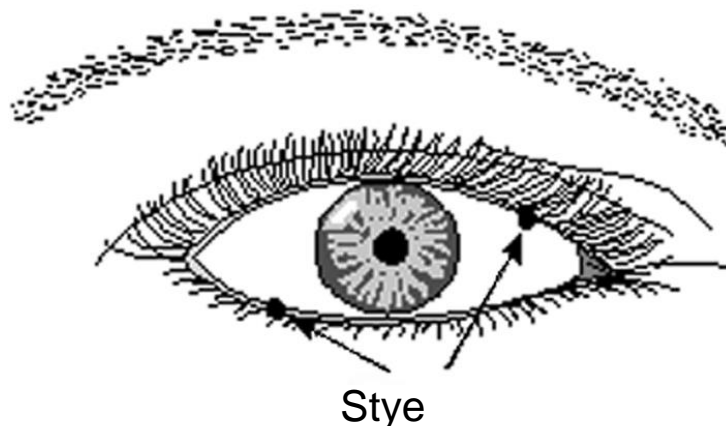
Eye Clinic
Tel: 01271 322467

Other formats

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What is a stye?

This is an infection around the base of an eyelash on the edge of the eyelid. It causes pain and tenderness, often with a yellowish head of 'pus'. Although a stye is a painful, unsightly swelling, it will not harm your vision.



Treatment

It should be treated with hot compresses to encourage the swelling to burst and enable the stye to drain. A stye should take five to seven days to resolve.

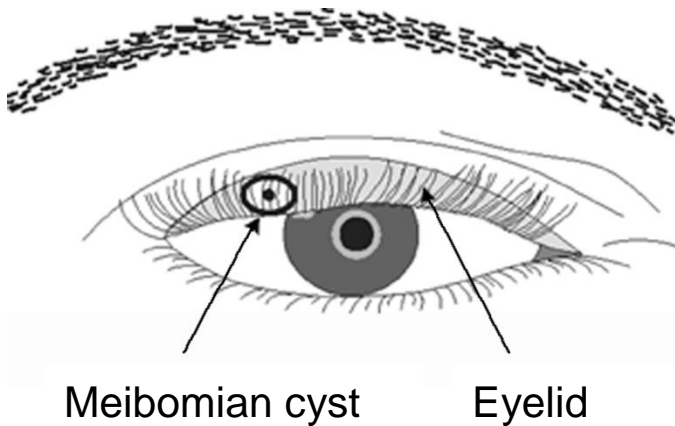
An anti-biotic ointment may be prescribed to apply to the eyelid at the site of the stye.

Whilst suffering with one or more styes, it is advisable to use your own flannel and towel, and avoid using make-up.

What is a meibomian cyst?

A meibomian cyst is a pea-like swelling in the eyelid. It is caused by inflammation of one or more small glands in the eyelid, called meibomian glands.

This cyst can become infected, causing pain, tenderness and redness.



Meibomian cysts are often associated with a condition affecting the lid margins called blepharitis. If you have this condition, you will be given instruction on how to clean the eyelids in a special way to prevent recurrences. A leaflet called Blepharitis is available from the Eye Clinic.

Treatment

Regular hot compresses to the affected eyelid.

Anti-biotic ointment may be prescribed, and on occasions anti-biotic tablets may be prescribed if a more-generalised infection of the eyelid is present.

Meibomian cysts often resolve with the above treatment; however, it is sometimes necessary to drain them by making a small incision on the inside of the lid. This is done after an injection of local anaesthetic.

The procedure is short and not painful, with an eye pad placed over the eye for approximately two hours. You will be given some anti-biotic ointment to use for a few days. This procedure is done in the Eye Clinic, no sooner than six weeks after the onset of the cyst.

Hot compresses

Hot compresses can be very helpful for people who have repeated episodes of meibomian cysts.

- Using a pad or clean flannel dipped in hot water, apply to the closed lids. Repeat several times. You may need to re heat the pad as it cools down.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns please ask any member of the medical or nursing team or contact the Eye Clinic, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 1pm.

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PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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