

Chalazion

Patient Information Leaflet

A Chalazion is a common condition affecting the eyelids. Along the edge of the both upper and lower eyelids sit a row of oil glands. These glands, also known as the meibomian glands, produce oil, which is a vital part of your tears. Tears are a mixture of oil and water. The watery part comes from a gland under the brow bone called the lacrimal gland.

The opening of the oil duct can become inflamed and then blocked. This causes swelling in the duct and the eyelid. A lump can be seen and felt where this has occurred and this is known as a chalazion or meibomian cyst. In some cases the chalazion can become infected.

In adults, it is rare for the chalazion to cause serious infection. The chalazion can vary in size and tenderness. Treatment involves hot compresses and massage to the affected lid. Use a face flannel and warm tap water to apply heat to chalazion. This will soften the oil and dilate the blocked opening to the gland. Apply this for 60-90 seconds. Then, massage the lump to encourage the gland to discharge. You may see a greyish discharge when you do this.

In some cases the acute phase settles and you are left with a smaller hard lump. In such cases a minor operation called incision and curettage can be carried out under local anaesthetic to remove the residual swelling.

If your eyeball becomes red and painful you should contact Ms. Crawley for a review or go to the emergency eye clinic at The Western Eye Hospital, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Marylebone Road London.