

Eye Unit - Nurse-led Eyelid Service

Chalazion

What is a chalazion?

A chalazion is a type of cyst that can occur in your eyelids. Along your eyelids, many glands (meibomian glands) produce an oily fluid that becomes part of your tears. Sometimes, the entrance to a gland blocks up. So, instead of the fluid coming out, it gets trapped and builds up to form a cyst (chalazion).

What causes a chalazion?

Sometimes there's no obvious reason for the cysts occurring.

It's known there's a much greater chance of developing a chalazion if you have another minor eyelid condition called **blepharitis**. This is an inflammatory condition of the eyelids.

You can manage blepharitis by learning to clean your eyelids in a specific way. If we find you have blepharitis, you'll be given exact details on the cleaning process.

How are chalazion treated?

Most patients with chalazion do not need any surgical treatment. It'll just disappear if left alone or treated with a clean flannel soaked in warm water.

The issue is how long it takes to go away. Some studies suggest that if left alone:



Patient Information

- 3 in 10 of these cysts will be gone in three months
- up to 9 in 10 of these cysts will settle within a year

Cysts that take longer than a year usually also settle. But this may take a few years.

If you don't want to wait for the cyst to resolve, you can have a small surgical procedure to release the trapped fluid.

What does surgery involve?

You'll come to the hospital as a day case. The surgery is performed under a local anaesthetic – you'll be awake during surgery and given an injection to numb your eyelid.

You need to know that the local anaesthetic works in a strange way. It numbs feelings of sharpness and pain but doesn't numb feelings of pressure or stretching. You may experience some discomfort during the procedure.

During surgery, a small clamp is positioned around the cyst to hold it in place. The eyelid is turned outwards so the underside of the eyelid can be seen. A small cut is then made on the inside of the eyelid, and any trapped fluid is removed.

After the procedure, the clamp is removed. Antibiotic ointment is applied, and an eye pad dressing is placed over the eye. The eye pad remains in place for at least 4 hours or overnight to reduce swelling and bruising.

What do I need to do after the surgery?

Once you remove the eye pad, clean the eyelid with cooled boiled water and cotton wool. Then apply the antibiotic ointment.

Apply the antibiotic ointment three times a day for a week.

Patient Information

If you're wearing an eye pad, you cannot drive as your insurance will not cover you.

The surgery only aims to release the trapped fluid, and the surrounding area of the cyst will take a little while to resolve. Often, the longer the cyst has been present, the longer it takes to settle. A small lump may be present for up to two months.

Are there any risks/complications with surgery?

All surgeries have risks attached to them. We'll discuss these with you before surgery. The risks with chalazion surgery are small but include:

Local anaesthetic

You must know what to expect when the local anaesthetic is first given. You'll feel a sharp sensation, usually followed by a stinging or burning feeling. This lasts about 5 seconds, and then the eyelid begins to go numb.

You must keep your head still whilst the local anaesthetic injection is given. If you move your head dramatically, there's a chance the tip of the needle could move into other areas around your eye.

Reoccurrence

This surgery is relatively simple to perform and usually gives a good result. Unfortunately, some people do have a reoccurrence of the cyst. You can get reoccurrence in the same place on the eyelid. Some people can be more susceptible to this type of cyst and can get more cysts forming on other areas of the eyelids.

Infection

The eyelids usually heal very well. Because the surgery is performed on the underside of the eyelid, the risk of infection is low. However, it's routine to use antibiotic ointment for a week after surgery to reduce this risk further as the eyelid heals.

Bruising

The eyelid will look worse immediately after surgery. It's normal to get some bruising and slight swelling - this should settle on its own in about a week.

Will I need to be seen again after surgery?

Appointments after surgery are not usually needed. However, if you're concerned about how your eyelid is healing, contact the nurse that undertook your surgery. They will assess you again.

If you cannot contact the nurse for any reason, book an Eye Emergency Referral Service (EERS). Visit www.uhcw.nhs.uk and search 'Eye Emergency Referral Service' or call 024 7696 4800.

Are there any other treatments for chalazion?

Apart from allowing the cyst to settle on its own or having surgery, the other option is for us to inject the cyst with a steroid. The results of this are not clear, and this is not offered in the Nurse-led service. If steroid injection is something you'd like to consider, please discuss it with the nurse.

Is there anything else I should know if I leave the cyst alone?

Sometimes the cysts can become infected. When they get infected, the cyst may suddenly become:

- bigger
- red and angry looking
- more tender to the touch

You need to get some antibiotic ointment or tablets from your doctor if this happens. The antibiotics will only get rid of the infection.

Patient Information

A very rare cancer can form in the glands in the eyelid. It's usually more common in older patients. contact us for a further assessment if:

- the cyst did not settle within a year
- the cyst began to gradually grow or bleed.

Visit your GP first and ask them to refer you back to the service.

For more information, contact the oculoplastic specialist nurse on **024 7696 6533**.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 6506 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback



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Emergency eye appointments: new booking system

If you have an urgent eye problem, you can now book an on-the-day telephone consultation via the Eye Emergency Referral Service (EERS).



Scan the QR code or visit www.uhcw.nhs.uk and search Eye Emergency Referral Service. You can book a telephone consultation via this link.

You will be spoken to by an expert clinician who will give you specialist advice on the next steps to take.

Please provide a phone number which you can be contacted on for the consultation. Please also be aware that you will be phoned as close to the allotted time as possible, although at busy times unfortunately there may be a delay.

In the event that you feel you cannot wait to speak to someone or do not have online access then you may call 024 7696 4800.

This phone line is open 9am - 1pm; 1.30pm - 5pm (Monday - Friday, excluding bank holidays) and 9am - 12pm (Saturday).

Please only attend the Eye Outpatient department if you have had a telephone consultation in advance and have been advised to attend.

In the event of an eye emergency out of hours, please attend the Minor Injuries Unit/Emergency Department.