



Chalazion

A chalazion (also known as a meibomian cyst) is a cyst in the eyelid. A common condition, it often occurs due to inflammation around the opening of the oil glands at the base of the eyelashes. The inflammation (called Blepharitis) is caused by sensitivity to a common bacteria found on the skin. When the opening of the small oil glands around the lashes becomes blocked by inflammation, a small tender swelling occurs in the eyelid. This is known as a Chalazion.

Treatment

The first stage of treatment involves using a warm compress and massaging your eyelid:

- **warm compress:** Boil some water and let it cool a little or use water from the hot tap. Soak cotton wool or a clean flannel in the warm (but not boiling) water, squeeze it out and gently press onto your closed eyelids for two to three minutes at a time.
- **massage:** Starting at the skin crease, gently massage the upper lid downwards to the lashes. The lower lid should be massaged upwards towards the lashes. This

may release the contents of the cyst, which means further treatment will not be necessary.

- **antibiotics** may also be prescribed to reduce the inflammation.

If the Chalazion does not respond to the first stage of the treatment, it can be drained. Your name will be placed on the minor operation list and you will be given a date to come in for this procedure. Your appointment letter will tell you where to check in on the day of surgery.

You will be admitted by the day surgery nurse. The operating nurse or doctor will examine you and discuss the risks and benefits of the surgery and the type of anaesthetic that can be given. They will also ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you are aware of the risks and benefits and agree to go ahead with the operation.

Benefits of surgery:

The inflamed Chalazion will be drained.



Risks involved:

- your eyelid might be swollen and bruised for several days after your operation but this should settle after two weeks.
- there is a risk of infection, but after the operation you will be given antibiotic ointment to apply, which should help prevent this.
- a Chalazion can come back after being removed. If this happens, please apply a warm compress to your closed eyelid (see page 1). Please contact us through your GP if your Chalazion persists despite this, as further treatment and investigation may be required.

The procedure

Your surgery will be performed by a nurse practitioner or doctor, who will explain the procedure again before they start operating.

Once you are lying comfortably on the operating table, the skin around the Chalazion will be injected with local anaesthetic. This will sting at first but the lid will soon become numb. Although you will still be able to feel touch and pressure you should not feel any pain.

The nurse or doctor will then make a small incision on the inner surface of your eyelid so that the contents of the cyst can be drained. Ointment will be applied and a pad placed over your eye.

You will be able to go home on the same day. Sometimes we will need to take a biopsy of the cyst. If this is done, a nurse will telephone you with the results or you will be sent a clinic appointment if needed.

Aftercare and advice

When the anaesthetic wears off, there may be some discomfort. To relieve this, you can take mild pain relief such as paracetamol. You should keep the pad over the eye for at least four hours as this reduces swelling and bruising. When you remove the pad, you will find some blood or discharge around your eye. Clean the eyelid with cooled boiled water and remember to use the antibiotic ointment as prescribed.

As this is a minor procedure which only involves surgery on the eyelid and not the eye, it should not affect your ability to work. If it does, please see your GP to discuss taking time off work.

When to seek advice

If your sight becomes blurred or you experience bleeding, you should call Moorfields Direct for advice (see details later in the leaflet) or go to your local A&E department. You can also go to Moorfields A&E department in City Road (open 24/7 for emergency eye problems only) for a further examination.





Useful contacts

Moorfields A&E at City Road, 162 City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Telephone switchboard:
020 7253 3411

This is a 24 hour service for eye emergencies only. Following triage, you may be seen on the day or informed that no treatment is needed at the service and advised to see your GP or optician. Alternatively, you may be booked into an urgent care clinic at City Road for a different day.

Authors: Claire Daniel, Nicola Dunlop
Revision number: 4
Approval date: June 2023
Review date: June 2026

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Phone: 020 7253 3411
www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline
Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm
Saturday, 9am-5pm
Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)
Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325
Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, except bank holidays

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. For more information about your rights and responsibilities, please visit the Moorfields website and search 'Referrals to treatment (RTT)'. To learn more about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs

