

Ophthalmology department

Chalazion

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about **chalazion** and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

What is a chalazion?

A chalazion is a swelling in the eyelid, caused by a blocked oil gland or following inflammation of the eyelid commonly known as blepharitis. This inflammation can cause the openings of the oil glands on the edge of the eyelid to become blocked, producing a lump called a chalazion (also commonly known as Meibomian cyst). As the oil glands are important in producing tears, blepharitis and chalazion are often associated with dry eyes. You may also find that your eyes feel itchy or crusty, especially in the morning. A chalazion is normally harmless, however in rare cases it may be big enough to obstruct vision.

What are the available treatments?

Medical

In most cases a chalazion will respond well to medical treatment without any need for surgery:

- Warm compress – soak a flannel under a hot tap, ring out any excess water and apply it to the affected eyelid for several minutes twice a day. You can also massage the lumps while you are doing this.
- Eyelid massage – massage the edge of the eyelids to help unblock the oil glands, working downwards for the upper lid and upwards for the lower lid.
- Antibiotics – if a chalazion becomes infected it may need treatment with an antibiotic. The use of cold compress to eye lid instead of a warm compress in these cases will also help to reduce any inflammation and swelling to the lid.

Surgical

If a chalazion does not resolve with medical treatment a minor surgery might be needed to help drain the lump. Commissioner requirements specify that you must have chalazion for six months or more and have symptoms before the surgery is undertaken. Surgery is done on the minor operations list as a day case procedure. You should continue with warm compress and eyelid massage treatment until the day of the surgery.

The surgery will be performed by a trained practitioner, who will first examine the chalazion to determine if it still needs to be drained. They will then go through the procedure with you, before asking you to sign a consent form to confirm you are happy to proceed with the surgery.

The procedure

You will be given local anaesthetic drops to help numb the surface of the eye and the eyelids will be cleaned thoroughly. The practitioner will then give an injection of local anaesthetic into the eyelid which will cause some stinging and discomfort. You should not feel any pain after this point. However, you will continue to feel pressure during the procedure. The clinician will then make a small cut on the inner surface of the eyelid and remove the contents of the chalazion. As this is on the inner surface of the eyelid it does not normally leave a visible scar. The operation itself normally takes about 15 minutes but you should expect to be in the hospital for at least an hour for the whole visit.

After the surgery

Once the procedure is finished a pad will be placed on the eye – you should leave this in place for 24 hours. It is normal for there to be some dried blood after removing the pad, and this should be gently cleaned away with a wet cloth. You will also be given some antibiotic ointment to use for a few days to reduce the small risk of infection.

You will normally be able to go home shortly after the procedure is finished, and it should not affect your ability to work. We recommend taking painkillers such as paracetamol if the eye remains sore after the operation; you should generally avoid aspirin unless you have been specifically prescribed it for another condition, as it may increase the risk of bleeding.

Risk of chalazion surgery

- The eyelid may be bruised and swollen for a few days; however, this normally resolve within two weeks.
- There is a small risk of infection; we will give you some antibiotic cream to reduce the risk of this happening. You should start using this after removing the pad.
- In some cases, it may not be possible to fully drain the chalazion, or you may develop another lump in a different location due to another gland becoming blocked; you should continue with warm compress and massage treatment in order to help prevent this.
- With all eye surgery procedures there is a small risk of damage to the eyelid, eye, or vision; however, this is extremely rare in the case of chalazion surgery.

Follow up

In most cases a chalazion operation will not require any follow up. Sometimes the clinician may wish to arrange a further appointment, for example if a biopsy sample is taken, and they will discuss this with you on the day of your operation.

Contacts for more information

- Emergency department at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3245
- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1109/ 1233/ 0137

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk