Patient Information - Accident and Emergency

Chalazion

A chalazion is a cyst in the eyelid and is a common condition. It often occurs due to inflammation around the opening of the oil glands at the base of the eyelashes, which is called blepharitis.

The inflammation 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 will occur in the lid. This is known as a chalazion.

Treatment
To prevent a chalazion from developing, daily lid cleaning is recommended as follows:

- Warm compress: Boil some water and let it cool for a while. Soak cotton wool or a clean flannel in the warm (but not boiling) water, wring it out and gently press onto your closed eyelids for two/three minutes at a time.

- Massage your eyelids by gently rolling your first finger over them in a circular motion. This helps to push out the oil from the tiny eyelid glands.

- Use a cotton bud to gently clean the edge of your lower lid: 1/4 teaspoon of baking powder in half a cup of water makes a good cleaning solution, but always squeeze out the cotton bud before use. Pull the top lid away from your eyeball while looking in a mirror, and clean the edge gently with the cotton bud. Wipe your eyes with clean water afterwards. Repeat this routine once or twice every day to prevent further flare-ups.

If your chalazion persists, we can offer you an incision and drainage under a local anaesthetic. If you wish to have this surgery, we will send you a date for your procedure through the post. If you wish to have the procedure done more locally, please see your GP to arrange this.

If your chalazion has resolved by the time you are due for surgery, please contact us to cancel your surgery on 020 7566 2292. Please make sure you cancel within a
week of your surgery so that we can use the operating space for another patient.

When to seek advice
If you feel your chalazion is getting larger and is not responding to the treatment above, or if there is a redness spreading across the lid, you should attend your local A&E department or the Moorfields 24/7 A&E department which is open for emergency eye problems only for a further examination.

If you are suffering with recurrent chalazia, please see your GP as you may benefit from a course of low-dose oral tetracycline antibiotic for four to six weeks.

If your chalazion persists despite the above treatment, please see your GP as they may wish to seek further ophthalmic advice to ensure there are no other problems with your eyelid.

If your eye becomes increasingly red or painful or if your sight becomes blurred, you should telephone Moorfields Eye Hospital Direct for advice on 020 7566 2345 or attend your local A&E department or the Moorfields 24/7 A&E department which is open for emergency eye problems only for a further examination.

Author: Miss Claire Daniel and Linda Langton
Revision number: 2
Approved: May 2014
Review date: May 2015

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS
details. For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, please visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.