BrienHoldenVisionInstitute

EYELID LUMPS AND BUMPS

THINK

Someone has a lump on their eyelid. They want to know what it is and what they should do about it. How do you know if the lump is something serious which needs urgent medical attention, or something less serious which just needs warm compresses?

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

When you have worked through this unit you should be able to:

- Identify the three most common lumps that are seen in the eyelids
- Advise people what to do about these lumps and and how to prevent them
- Know which lumps in the eyelid should be referred.

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GLANDS OF THE EYELID

- The upper and lower eyelids have many glands located along the lid margins and deeper in the lids
- The lacrimal glands are responsible for producing tears that protect and moisten the eyeball
- The watery component of tears is released by the lacrimal gland
- Some other glands along the lid margins contribute the oily and mucus components of the tear film
- It is not uncommon for some of these eyelid glands to become inflamed or infected.

WHAT ARE EYELID LUMPS?

- Most lumps on the eyelid are caused by blocked or infected eyelid glands – and can be either a stye or a chalazion
- These types of eyelid lumps are very common – most people will have had it at least once during their lifetime
- Some eyelid lumps and bumps are dangerous (it could be a form of skin cancer) and need urgent referral for immediate treatment
- It is very important to be able to identify eyelid lumps and bumps and treat or refer them as needed.

STYE

WHAT IS IT?	• A sore red lump on the upper or lower eyelid • A stye is an infection of a gland in the eyelid, at the base of an eyelash • The most common type of eyelid lump • Styes do not affect your vision.
CAUSES	• Usually caused by bacteria • The infection can set in when an eyelid gland becomes blocked with oil or dirt.
WHAT DO I ASK?	• When did you first notice the lump? • How do your eyes feel? • How does the lump feel? Is it painful to touch? • Does it affect your vision?
SYMPTOMS	• A painful, red lump on the eyelid margin • Could develop a white or yellow top • Painful and tender.

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WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Styes can be found on the outside of the eyelid (external stye) or on the inside of the eyelid (internal stye).

Figure 7-1: A stye on the lower eyelid (photo courtesy of the Brien Holden Vision Institute)

SIGNS

INTERNAL STYE	EXTERNAL STYE
Red, swollen eyelid	Red, swollen lump on the eyelid
Yellow "point" on the skin or eyelid conjunctiva	Yellow "point" might develop near base of lashes

- The styes may be:
  - On the upper and/or lower lid
  - More than one lump
  - In one or both eyes.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Measure the vision
- Closely examine the eyelids with a torch or a slit lamp.

TREATMENT PLAN

- Most styes will get better in a week or two without any treatment
- Tell the person:
  - To put a warm, wet cloth on the eyelid (close the eye) for about 10 minutes, three or four times a day for a week
  - To return to see you if it is not better after a week
- If the stye does not disappear after a week or two, you need to refer the person to a medical practitioner.

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CHALAZION

WHAT IS IT?	• An enlarged or blocked eyelid gland • Might have been an infection (stye) before • Does not hurt when touched • Can last for a few weeks to a few months • Usually a chalazion is harmless, but if it grows large enough it can press on the eyeball and affect vision • Often associated with blepharitis.
CAUSES	• A chalazion is due to a blocked or enlarged gland in the eyelid • It is not an infection.
WHAT DO I ASK?	• When did you first notice the lump? • How does your eye feel? Is there pain? • Does the lump affect your vision? • Can you open your eyelids properly?
SYMPTOMS	• At first a chalazion might look and feel like a stye – with a red and swollen eyelid which is tender to touch • After a day or two, these symptoms disappear – leaving a round, painless lump or swelling on the eyelid • This lump can slowly increase in size for about the first week.
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?	 ***Figure 7-2: A chalazion on the upper eyelid (photo courtesy of the International Centre for Eye Health)***
SIGNS	• Round, hard lump in the eyelid, away from the eyelid margin • Can be on the upper or lower lid • Not as red as a stye • Does not hurt when touched.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?	• Measure vision • With a torch or slit lamp, carefully examine the lump • Determine if it is painful or not.

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TREATMENT PLAN	• Most chalazions disappear within a few weeks without any treatment
	• Advise the person to apply warm compresses 2 to 3 times a day until it disappears
	• It can be removed surgically if the person is unhappy about the lump
	• Good lid hygiene to treat associated blepharitis
	• Refer to a medical practitioner if:
	  ○ The chalazion is large
	  ○ It is painful
	  ○ It does not disappear within 2 months
	  ○ There is more than one chalazion
	  ○ It keeps returning.

WHAT SHOULD I NOT DO?	• Do *NOT* try to squeeze the lump.

STYE VS. CHALAZION:

- **Styes and chalazia are often mistaken for one another**
- **A chalazion is different to a stye because it:**
  - **is not as red**
  - **is not painful**
  - **is not on the eyelid margin.**
- **If a lump on the eyelid is not painful when touched, most likely it's a chalazion.**

PREVENTING EYELID LUMPS:

- **Good hygiene can help prevent lumps on the eyelids**
- **Clean the lids with warm, clean water every day – especially near the lashes.**

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SKIN CANCERS

WHAT IS IT?	• Skin cancers on the face are often found on the eyelids, especially the lower eyelid
	• The sores are not painful and can change in size and colour with time
	• More common in older, fair skinned people
	• Skin cancers need to be treated because:
	  ○ they get bigger and can cause more damage
	  ○ they may spread to other parts of the body and can cause death.

CAUSES	• Prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun is the major cause of skin cancers • People who spend large amounts of their time in the sun are more likely to get skin cancers.
WHAT DO I ASK?	• When did you first notice the lump? • How does your eye feel? Is there any pain? • Does the lump affect your vision? • Can you open your eyelids properly? • Has the lump changed size or shape? • Is the lump like a sore that will not heal? • Does it bleed?
SYMPTOMS	• A lump, growth or sore on or around the eyelids • Usually not painful • Does not get better • Can change in size, colour and appearance over time.

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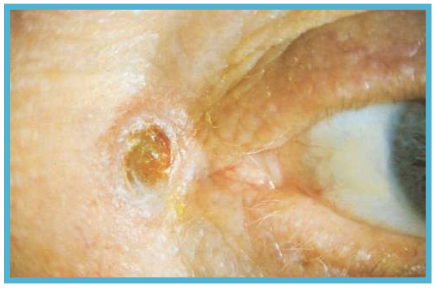
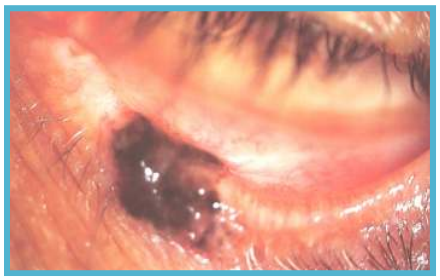
SIGNS	• Skin cancers can look different – depending on what type of cancer it is • They can be: ○ A raised, dark spot that is getting bigger ○ Sometimes it bleeds  ○ A lump that has an ulcerated sore  ○ A dark lump with irregular edges ○ A sore that does not heal. ***Figure 7-3: Different types of cancers around the eye (photo courtesy of the WHO)***
WHAT SHOULD I DO?	• Measure vision • Take a close look at the lid with a torch or slit lamp • Measure the size of the sore – this will allow you to monitor the growth of the cancer over time
TREATMENT PLAN	• Immediate referral to a medical doctor is important to stop the cancer from spreading.

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REFER THE PERSON TO A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER <u>IMMEDIATELY</u> IF YOU SEE:

- **A lump that is ulcerated (weepy, slow healing sore)**
- **A raised, dark spot that is getting bigger or sometimes bleeds**
- **A dark, uneven lump on the eyelid**
- **A sore around the eyes which does not heal.**

PREVENTION:

- **Always wear a pair of sunglasses and a hat that shades the face when going outside**
- **This can help prevent skin cancer on the face.**

Figure 7-4: Wearing sunglasses and a hat outside can help prevent skin cancer on the face

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SUMMARY – EYELID LUMPS AND BUMPS

STYE

- A stye is one of the most common eyelid lumps
- It may occur on the inside of the eyelid (internal stye) or on the outside of the eyelid (external stye)
- The eyelid is red, swollen and often very sore
- Many styes disappear without treatment
- Advise the person to use a warm towel on the lump three times a day for a week
- A lump that will not go away may need to be surgically removed.

CHALAZION

- A chalazion is a round lump on the eyelid
- Caused by a blocked or enlarged gland in the eyelid
- A chalazion is different to a stye because:
  - it is not as red
  - is not painful
  - is not found on the lid margin
- Most chalazia disappear without treatment after a few weeks.

SKIN CANCERS

- Skin cancer is caused by prolong exposure to sunlight
- Skin cancers on the face are often found on the eyelids, especially the lower lid
- The sores are not painful and can change in size and colour with time
- Refer the person to a medical practitioner IMMEDIATELY if you see:
  - A lump that is ulcerated (weepy slow healing sore)
  - A raised, dark spot that is getting bigger or sometimes bleeds
  - A dark, uneven lump
  - A sore that does not heal
- People should be advised on the importance of wearing sunglasses and a hat when outside.

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TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. **Which types of eyelid lumps and bumps should be referred?**

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2. **How is a chalazion different to a stye?**

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3. **Describe a simple, readily available treatment for styes:**

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4. **How can you prevent getting styes?**

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5. **What can a person do to prevent skin cancer on the face?**

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6. **Why is it important to refer a person when you suspect they might have skin cancer?**

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