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## CHALAZION

**Q *What is a chalazion?***

**A** A chalazion, also known as a meibomian cyst, is caused by swelling and inflammation in one of the twenty or so small glands found in each of the eyelids.

**Q *Does a chalazion have to be treated?***

**A** No. Without treatment the inflammation usually subsides leaving a small, hard swelling about the size of a pea within the eyelid. Sometimes this gradually disappears over several months but more often it remains unchanged.

**Q *What is the best treatment for chalazion?***

**A** Although injections of steroid into the eyelid close to the cyst can sometimes work the best treatment is usually surgery. This is usually done as an outpatient. A small injection of local anaesthetic is given into the eyelid to make it numb. A general anaesthetic can be used if preferred and it is always used for children. A cut is made in the back of the eyelid to empty the cyst. It is usually necessary to wear an eye pad for one day then ointment is used twice a day for five days.

**Q *Are there any serious complications of the treatment?***

**A** No. Bruising and swelling is not uncommon for a day or two. Occasionally the cyst does not disappear completely and needs to be opened again. Much less commonly, another cyst may appear close to the site of the original cyst. This is treated in the same way.

Chalazions at the *margin* of the eyelid may not respond fully to surgical incision. Surgery may actually make them worse. This type is often allowed to resolve slowly without treatment. It may take several months.

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