

Eyelid lumps and bumps

Patient information on the common reasons for eyelid lumps and bumps and when to ask for advice.

What are eyelid lumps and bumps?

The most common eyelid lumps and bumps are listed below.

Hordeolum ('stye')

An acute infection of an oil gland on the edge of the eyelid, which is often red, painful and tender to the touch. Styes can be external (where the glands on the edge of the lid are infected) or internal (where the glands deeper inside the lid are infected).

Most styes will get better on their own within a few days. You can help to relieve the pain and swelling by applying a warm compress to the affected area several times a day. Your optometrist may recommend an antibiotic ointment or eye drops.

Chalazion

A chronically blocked oil gland in the eyelid. Chalazions are usually painless and may develop following a stye. If the swelling is large, it can affect your vision. Most chalazions will get better within six months with a regular hot compress, but some people may need a steroid injection or surgery to remove them.

Xanthelasma

Flat, yellow, cholesterol deposits on the eyelids. Xanthelasma are more common in people with high cholesterol or other lipid disorders. They are not harmful but can be removed for cosmetic reasons with surgery or laser treatment.

Papilloma

Small, skin-coloured growths on the eyelids, which are often caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Papilloma usually do not require treatment, but can be surgically removed if they are large, unsightly or uncomfortable.

Cysts

Fluid-filled sacs that can form on the eyelids. They are usually painless, but they can be unsightly. Cysts that are small and painless may not require treatment, but larger or uncomfortable cysts need to be removed surgically.

When do I need to get further advice?

You should contact your optometrist or GP for advice if you notice:

- a change in the size, shape or colour of the lump or bump;
- discharge from the lump or bump;
- pain, itchiness or swelling around the eye; or
- no improvement after simple treatments (such as using a hot compress for a chalazion).

Preventing eyelid lumps and bumps

There is no sure way to prevent eyelid lumps and bumps. However, following the advice below can help to reduce your risk.

- Keep your eyelids clean.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes.
- Use clean make-up, don't share make-up with friends, and replace items regularly.

If you have any questions or concerns about a lump or bump on your eyelid, speak to your optometrist.

About the AOP

The Association of Optometrists (AOP) is the voice of the optical profession, representing over 80% of practising optometrists. The AOP elevates the work of its members, safeguards their interests, and champions eye health across the UK. For more information, visit www.aop.org.uk