

CHALAZION

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This protocol is a general guideline and does not represent the professional standard of care required of the health care provider.

This pathway should be modified as indicated, based on the health care provider's professional judgment, to meet the needs of individual patients.

Chalazion Management

What is a chalazion?

A chalazion is a bump in the eyelid that is usually about the size of a small pea although it is occasionally smaller or larger. More than one chalazion can occur in an eyelid at the same time,



What causes a chalazion?

Small glands lining the edge of the eyelids produce oil that helps lubricate the surface of the eye. When one of these glands becomes blocked, oil backs up inside the gland and forms a bump in the eyelid. If the gland ruptures, the oily materials can irritate the eyelid causing it to become red, swollen and painful.

Is a chalazion the same thing as a stye?

A chalazion is not exactly the same thing as a stye, although sometimes the terms are used interchangeably. A stye, medically referred to as a hordeolum, is a bump in the eyelid that occurs when an oil gland becomes infected. In effect, it is like a small abscess or "boil" on the edge of the eyelid. A chalazion is an accumulation of material in the eyelid as a result of a blocked oil gland.

Why do chalazia occur?

Usually there is no known underlying cause. However, chronic inflammation of the oil gland openings, (blepharitis), predisposes to the development of a chalazion. This situation may result in recurrent chalazia. Blepharitis may be aggravated by poor eyelid hygiene which includes eye rubbing in children.

What are the treatment options for chalazia?

Most chalazia resolve by themselves within several days to weeks, but ***sometimes can take months to completely disappear***. Warm soaks to both eyes can promote drainage of the blocked gland and prevent potential lesions on the other side. Anti-inflammatory eye drops, ointments or an injection into the bump may be needed. A large swollen or persistent chalazion might require surgical drainage. Children who develop preseptal cellulitis require oral antibiotics. Although older children and adults can undergo the procedure in a doctor's office under local anesthesia, general anesthesia is usually necessary to drain chalazia in young children.

How can chalazia be prevented?

A daily regimen of eyelid scrubs or washes with baby shampoo or an eyelid cleanser can reduce the chances of developing new chalazia. This is especially useful when blepharitis is present. For those with a recurrent problem, topical or oral antibiotics are sometimes prescribed.

When does a child with a chalazion need to see an ophthalmologist?

After a minimum of 3 months of daily hot compresses. This is where expectation management is vital to prevent parental frustration. Heat to BOTH eyes even if only one is involved to prevent the development of new lesions. A heating pad wrapped in a soft towel works best. **Warn parents to test the heat level on their own hand first to prevent burns!!**