

## Styes, Meibomian Cysts and Warm Compresses

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### A Stye

This is an infection around the base of an eyelash on the edge of the eyelid. It causes acute pain and tenderness, often with a yellow 'point' of pus. It should be treated with warm compresses to encourage the swelling to burst and enable pus to drain away. A stye should take about 5-7 days to resolve.

Antibiotic ointment may be prescribed by your General Practitioner.

### A Meibomian Cyst

A meibomian cyst is a swelling in the eyelids but not at the edge of the lid as with styes.

It is a pea-like swelling which may or may not be painful. It is caused by the blockage of a duct which normally allows oily secretions to drain out at the lid edge. If unable to drain out, the secretions form a cyst. This can sometimes become infected which causes pain and redness. Regular warm compresses and massage to the eyelid are most useful. Antibiotic treatments can be prescribed by your GP and may be helpful.

Meibomian cysts usually resolve without further treatment. Surgery is rarely necessary.

Cysts are often associated with a condition affecting the lid edges called *blepharitis* when particles of dead skin and oil block the duct opening at the inner edge of the lids. If you have this condition, to prevent recurrences you will be told how to clean the lids in a special way and a leaflet called *Eyelid Hygiene* is available from the Unit. This is an ongoing condition.

### Warm compresses

Warm compresses can be very helpful for people who have repeated episodes of meibomian cysts.

Using a 'pad' or a clean flannel dipped in heated water, apply to the closed lids. Repeat several times as it cools. Dry the lids, cleaning away any pus with clean cotton wool or tissue.

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