SYMPTOM

Eyelid bump

An eyelid bump is a small lump on or within the upper or lower eyelid.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE
A tender or painless lump along the eyelid

WHERE IT IS FELT
Upper or lower eyelid, often near the lashes

MOST COMMON CAUSES
Stye, chalazion, blocked skin gland

WHEN IT IS URGENT
Vision change, fever, or pain when moving the eye

USUALLY LASTS
Days to weeks, depending on the cause

SEE A DOCTOR IF
Persists several weeks, keeps returning, or changes the eyelid

Overview

An eyelid bump is a lump on the surface, edge, or deeper part of an eyelid. It may be painful and red, or painless and firm. Some bumps form suddenly, while others grow slowly.

Most eyelid bumps come from a blocked oil gland or a minor infection near an eyelash. These often improve with simple care. Other possibilities include a skin cyst, inflammation around the eyelids, or a harmless skin growth.

A bump that does not heal, repeatedly returns in the same place, or damages the eyelashes needs medical assessment. Rarely, a persistent eyelid lump can be a type of skin cancer. An examination is the only way to identify the cause.

What it may feel or look like

The appearance and sensation can offer clues, but they cannot confirm a diagnosis.

You may notice:

A bump can occur on the outside of the eyelid or on its inner surface. More than one may develop at a time.

- A small red, tender spot near the eyelashes
- A deeper, round lump within the eyelid
- Local swelling, warmth, or soreness
- A firm, painless bump that remains after tenderness settles
- Watery eyes or a gritty feeling
- Crusting around the eyelashes
- Mild blurred vision if a large bump presses on the eye

Common causes

A stye , also called a hordeolum, is an inflamed or infected gland near an eyelash. It usually causes a painful, red bump near the eyelid edge. It may develop a small yellow or white centre.

A chalazion is a blocked oil gland deeper in the eyelid. It may begin with tenderness but often becomes a firm, painless lump. Chalazia can last longer than styes and may grow large enough to press on the eye.

Blepharitis is ongoing inflammation along the eyelid edges. It can cause redness, itching, crusting, and blocked oil glands. People with blepharitis may develop repeated styes or chalazia.

Other, less common causes include small fluid-filled cysts, skin tags, warts, and fatty yellow patches called xanthelasma. Molluscum contagiosum, a viral skin infection, can produce smooth bumps with a small dip in the centre.

A slowly growing bump can occasionally be an eyelid cancer. Features that need assessment include loss of eyelashes, bleeding, an open sore, an irregular edge, or a lump that changes the shape of the eyelid.

When to seek medical care

Seek emergency care now if the bump or swelling comes with:

These symptoms may point to a problem affecting the eye socket or the eye itself rather than only the eyelid.

Arrange same-day medical care if redness or swelling is spreading around the eye, you have a fever, you feel significantly unwell, or swelling prevents you from opening the eye. Infection around the eyelid sometimes needs prompt treatment.

Book a routine appointment if the bump lasts several weeks, keeps growing, returns in the same place, or interferes with vision. It should also be checked if it bleeds, forms a persistent sore, causes eyelashes to fall out, or changes the eyelid's shape.

Earlier assessment may be appropriate if you have a weakened immune system or have recently had eye surgery or an eye injury.

- New loss or change of vision
- Pain or difficulty when moving the eye
- An eye that appears pushed forward
- Severe eye pain, especially with headache, nausea, or vomiting

How the cause is found

A clinician will usually examine the eyelid, eyelashes, surrounding skin, and surface of the eye. They may gently turn the eyelid inside out to look for a blocked gland or a bump on the inner surface.

They may ask when the bump appeared, whether it is painful, and whether you have discharge, fever, vision changes, skin conditions, or previous eyelid lumps.

Tests are not usually needed for a typical stye or chalazion. A persistent, unusual, or repeatedly returning bump may be photographed, referred to an eye specialist, or sampled with a biopsy. A biopsy removes a small piece of tissue for examination under a microscope.

Treatment and self-care

For a likely blocked gland or stye, place a clean, comfortably warm compress over the closed eyelid. Warmth can soften trapped oil and help the gland drain. Rewarm the cloth as needed, and avoid temperatures that could burn the skin.

Do not squeeze, pierce, or cut the bump. This can spread inflammation or infection. Wash your hands before touching the eyelid, and avoid sharing towels. It may help to pause eye makeup and contact lens use until pain, discharge, and redness have settled.

If crusting is present, gently clean the eyelid edge with warm water or an eyelid-cleansing product recommended by a healthcare professional. Avoid putting essential oils, harsh soaps, or unprescribed steroid creams near the eye.

Antibiotics like amoxicillin or doxycycline do not open a blocked oil gland. A clinician may

prescribe them if there are signs of bacterial infection or spreading redness. A persistent or large chalazion may be treated by an eye specialist with a small drainage procedure or a steroid injection. Other types of bumps require treatment aimed at their specific cause.

What to expect

A small stye often improves over several days, although the remaining lump can take longer to disappear. A chalazion may take several weeks to shrink.

Some people develop repeated bumps, especially when they have blepharitis, rosacea, or oil glands that block easily. Regular eyelid care may reduce recurrences, but a bump that repeatedly forms in exactly the same place should be examined.

Avoid trying to drain a bump yourself, even if it appears ready to open.

Common questions

Is an eyelid bump contagious?

A blocked gland or chalazion is not contagious. A stye itself does not usually spread between people, but bacteria on the hands, towels, or eye makeup can be transferred. Handwashing and not sharing personal items are sensible precautions.

Can an eyelid bump affect vision?

A large chalazion can press on the front of the eye and temporarily blur or distort vision. Any new vision change should be assessed promptly rather than assumed to come from the bump.

Should I pop a stye?

No. Squeezing or piercing it can push infection into nearby tissue. Warm compresses allow many styes to drain without being forced.

Why does the bump keep returning?

Repeated bumps may be linked to blepharitis, rosacea, or poorly draining eyelid oil glands. A clinician should assess a lump that repeatedly appears in the same location to confirm the cause.

Could it be cancer?

Most eyelid bumps are not cancer. However, a lump that grows, bleeds, causes eyelash loss, forms a sore, or does not heal needs examination. A biopsy may be needed if its appearance is unusual.

Sources

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