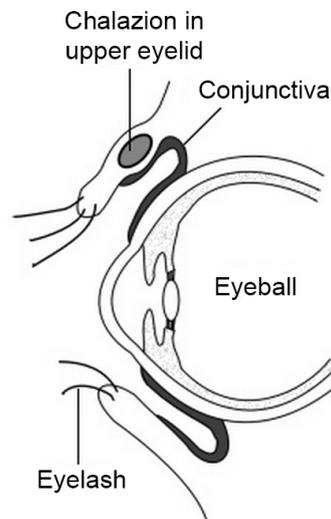
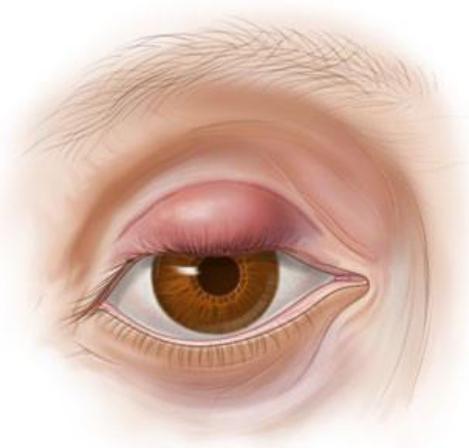


## Meibomian cyst (also known as Chalazion or Tarsal cyst)

A meibomian cyst is a swelling in the eyelid caused by a blocked meibomian gland. Meibomian glands lie in a row behind the eyelashes, open onto the back edge of the eyelid margin and secrete oil onto the tear film. If an opening becomes blocked, oil builds up and forms a cyst causing inflammation, swelling and occasionally infection. A meibomian cyst may irritate the eye and cause blurred vision due to pressure on the eyeball.

A meibomian cyst is sometimes confused with a sty. A sty is an infection of an eyelash follicle that forms a painful lump near the margin of the eyelid whereas a meibomian cyst is a sterile inflammatory reaction to trapped oil secretions. A meibomian cyst usually occurs further from the eyelid margin than a sty.



### Who gets a meibomian cyst?

Anyone at any age can develop a meibomian cyst. Some people are prone to developing them especially if they have chronic blepharitis (a common inflammatory eyelid condition). Recurrent meibomian cysts in children usually occur less frequently as they get older.

### What treatments are available?

Although a small meibomian cyst may disappear by itself, they are usually treated with one or more of the following methods.

#### 1. Hot compresses

Soak a facecloth in hot water then hold it against the eyelid for at least 1 minute. Repeat 2-3 times. Do this at least twice daily. The heat softens the oil in the blocked meibomian gland making it more likely to discharge.

## 2. Massage

After a hot compress, use the fingertips to massage the eyelid over and around the cyst towards the eyelid margin. This may allow the cyst to discharge.

## 3. Antibiotics

An antibiotic ointment is sometimes applied to the cyst for several days in cases of minor infection. More severe infection may require an oral antibiotic.

## 4. Surgery

Meibomian cysts that do not respond to the above treatments usually require a minor operation called incision and curettage. For adults this is carried out in either clinic or the operating theatre under local anaesthesia, whereas for children this is performed in the operating theatre under general anaesthesia. The procedure takes only a few minutes.

Your eye is numbed using an anaesthetic eye drop. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin around the cyst. A small clamp is placed on the eyelid, a cut is made into the cyst on the inside of the eyelid and the contents of the cyst scooped out with a special spoon (curette). The clamp is removed, then antibiotic ointment is applied to the eye and the eye is padded for a few hours. Antibiotic eye ointment is used afterwards for several days to prevent infection.

It is normal to have swelling and bruising of the eyelid for a few days. Most people have little or no pain, although there may be some discomfort. **Paracetamol or Panadeine** are good painkillers.

There is a rare possibility of **bleeding** from the incision site. If this occurs, apply **firm pressure on the eyelid for 10 minutes** without ceasing. If the bleeding continues despite this please **contact Dr <lastname> at the rooms on (07) <phone> or on mobile <mobile>**. If unavailable, go directly to the Emergency Department at Tauranga Public Hospital.

## Will it happen again?

For most people a meibomian cyst occurs just once. However, some people are prone to developing them and it may recur. You may be able to prevent recurrence by using hot compresses and massage long term as outlined above.