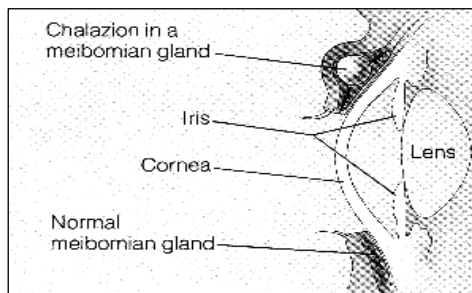
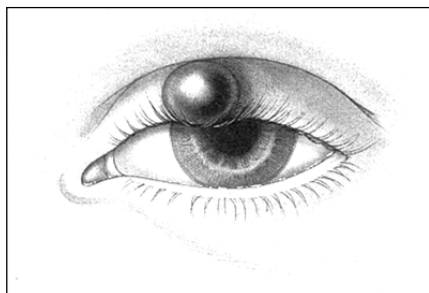


Chalazion and Hordeolum



A **chalazion** is an eyelid lesion, which can occur on the upper or lower eyelid of either eye. The term “chalazion” comes from the Greek word meaning small lump. A chalazion occurs when there is a blockage in the meibomian gland of an eyelid. The meibomian gland is responsible for producing the oily component of a person’s tears. If this gland becomes blocked then fatty material “backs up” within the gland. In addition, inflammation and infection may be associated with the blockage. Occasionally, a chalazion may become so big it presses on the eye and affects one’s vision.

A **hordeolum** (stye) is similar to a chalazion but is not exactly the same. Rather than a blockage deep within the meibomian gland, a hordeolum consists of a blockage of the gland openings right at the eyelid margin. This is where the oily material flows out of onto the eye. Again, there may be inflammation and an infection associated with the blockage. Sometimes, the blocked material of a hordeolum can be effectively expressed at the slit lamp in the exam room.

Initial treatment of both a chalazion and hordeolum consists of hot compresses and oral antibiotics. It is important to be diligent with performing hot compresses four times a day as well as taking the oral antibiotics as directed. Hot compresses should be performed in this fashion; take a potato, warm it in the microwave then wrap it in a washcloth. Hold the warm compress over the eyelid, massaging the affected area for about 5 minutes. Also, taking an omega-3 nutritional supplement long-term helps improve the blocked glands.

There are times when the chalazion does not resolve completely even with diligent treatment. In these cases, a minor procedure needs to be performed in the office in order to effectively drain the blocked gland. This consists of giving a shot of anesthetic to the affected eyelid. A clamp is then placed on the lid, which is then everted. An incision is made then the blocked material is removed. The clamp is removed and the affected eye is patched until the evening. It is best to have a driver to take you home after this procedure because with one eye patched your depth perception will be affected.

Some people have a tendency to have multiple or recurrent chalazia. Also, skin cancer may masquerade as a chalazion. Therefore, it is imperative that these be evaluated and treated as early as possible. Also, it is important to maintain good eyelid hygiene and regular eye exams. Should you have any questions or want to schedule an evaluation, please feel free to call our office.