What is a Stye?

A stye (pronounced “sti”) is an infection or inflammation of an eyelid gland. Styes are common and are not considered a serious problem. However, they can hurt, causing your eyes to become sensitive to bright light, itchy and watery.

Signs & Symptoms

A stye is characterized by a small red lump or pimple on the edge of the eyelid or on the eyelid. It is caused by a plugged oil gland in the eyelid. The head of the stye is usually on the outside of the eyelid, but it may be on the underside of the eyelid. The top or bottom of your eyelid may be warm, red, swollen and painful. You may have a gritty feeling in your eye. A white or yellow head of pus may show up on the eyelid a few days after the stye forms. The stye usually opens on its own to let the pus drain out. A stye does not affect your vision and is usually gone within a few weeks.

What can you do?

Most styes will go away with time. But, if you experience recurrent styes you should have an eye care professional look at it. For the majority of styes home treatment helps. Here are a few suggestions for home treatment of a stye:

• Make a compress, by soaking a clean wash cloth in warm water.
• Wring out the wash cloth and place it gently over the eyelid.
• Put the warm compress on your eyelid for ten minutes, four times a day.
• The warm compress will help the stye to drain.
• Your healthcare provider may give you antibiotic drops or ointment to treat the stye.
• If the stye does not drain on its own your healthcare provider might need to drain it.
• Do not squeeze the stye.
• Wash your hands often with soap and dry with a clean towel.
• Keep your eyelashes clean. You could gently wash your eyelids with baby shampoo and warm water twice a week.
• Don’t share eye makeup with anyone.

Call your doctor if:

• Your eye pain gets worse
• Your vision changes
• The stye has not gone away within a few weeks
• The stye comes back within a short time after treatment
• You have redness around the eye
• You have discharge from your eye
• You have a temperature over 102°F (39°C)
• You have any concerns about your eyes

NOTE: The content provided is intended for educational purposes only. It is not to be considered medical advice. Please consult with your provider for additional information and/or appropriate care.