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Styes

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What is a stye?

Styes are common bacterial infections which occur at the eyelash root. This causes a small, painful abscess on the outside of the eyelid, which appears as a red

lump and typically has a yellow spot in the middle. Usually, styes only affect one eye at a time but it is possible to have multiple styes.

What causes a stye?

Usually, a stye is caused by an infection of staphylococcus bacteria, which is a bacterium found in the nose and easily transferred to the eye through contact. This bacteria can then result in infection or inflammation of the eyelash hair follicle, causing the ducts to become blocked and the oil to back up. As a result, the eyelid swells and can feel painful.

Eye stye causes can also include long-term [blepharitis](#), an eyelid inflammation which can increase your risk of developing a stye. Other risk factors include certain skin conditions like dermatitis, some medical conditions such as diabetes, and the use of old cosmetic products.

What are stye symptoms?

Common eye stye symptoms include a visible lump and swelling of the eyelid. Your eye or eyelid may become red, painful and tender, and you may experience drooping of the eyelids, watery eyes or eye discharge before the stye abscess develops.

If there's no lump on your eye but your eyelid has become swollen, watery and red, then it is more likely to be blepharitis or [conjunctivitis](#) than a stye. [Chalazions](#) can also cause hard lumps around your eyes but, unlike styes, these are typically not painful.

Stye prevention methods include keeping your eyelids and eyelashes clean, removing eye makeup before bed and replacing eye makeup products every six

months. It's also a good idea to treat any underlying blepharitis, which may be causing styes to recur.

How to treat a stye

The majority of styes will heal on their own in a few days or weeks, with some bursting to release pus within three or four days after developing. It is important that you never attempt to burst a stye yourself, as this can cause the infection to spread to other areas.

There are recommended home remedies for a stye which can encourage the stye to drain naturally and heal faster. These include soaking a clean compress in warm water and holding it against the eye for between 5-10 minutes multiple times a day. You should also wash your hands regularly, avoid wearing contacts and stop applying makeup to the affected area until it has healed in order to avoid spreading the infection and causing further irritation of the eye. Over the counter painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, can be taken to help relieve any pain.

When to seek further treatment

You shouldn't require further stye treatment unless your stye is very swollen and painful, is not getting better within a few weeks time, is affecting your vision, or if the infection appears to be spreading. A stye inside the eyelid (internal hordeolum) can also be more serious and may require surgical treatment.

Your GP will be able to advise on how to get rid of a stye. They may administer antibiotics for your eye stye treatment, or drain it using a sterilised needle or by removing the eyelash to encourage the stye to discharge. Alternatively, they may refer you to a

specialist ophthalmologist.

Reasons to choose Moorfields Private for your stye treatment

When you choose Moorfields Private for further treatment of your stye eye infection, you can enjoy complete peace of mind, knowing you'll receive the highest quality of care. We have a worldwide reputation and our surgeons are highly experienced, working at the top of their professions and holding accredited consultant positions at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

We take great pride in providing complete continuity throughout our service. This means that during every visit, you will see your surgeon of choice, who will oversee the entire process from initial consultation to follow-up appointments. If you want to make an appointment with one of our consultants, please call our New Patients Team on Freephone: 0800 3283 421 or Email: moorfieldsprivate.enquiries@nhs.net

Further Information

If you wish to find out more, you can read our recommended blog post below:

- [Why Moorfields Private is the right choice for you](#)

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