

The Quick Summary

You have nothing to worry about. This is a blocked oil gland in your eyelid, and it will go away with warm compresses in a week or two.

Stye

You have a blocked oil gland in your eyelid. Oil glands in the eyelid are needed, because the oil from the eyelids keeps the watery tears from evaporating away. But, if an oil gland gets blocked, the oil builds up where it is not supposed to, and the body has an inflammatory reaction to it. That blocked oil is also a breeding ground for growth of the bacteria that are normally in your eyelid, so you have a “mini infection” of bacteria that are usually in your eyelid anyway.

Since those bacteria are usually there anyway, they do not need to be treated in most cases. The key to solving the problem is to unblock the oil gland.

The oil gland opening is pretty small. However, if you apply heat to it, the oil gland opening might get a little bigger. Also, applying heat to the oil gland will cause the oil to “melt” a little more so that it can flow better (and thus flow out of the slightly increased opening). If you massage the blocked oil gland area while you apply heat, that’s even better to get the oil flowing to get things unblocked.



You should do warm compresses at least twice a day, in which you apply heat and gentle massage. Warm compresses involve holding a washcloth soaked with shower-temperature water over the eyes for **5-10 minutes**. While Dr. Shalwala recommends at least twice a day, the more warm compresses you do, the faster your oil gland will become unblocked.

The fact that you have developed this single blocked oil gland (the stye) means that you have a tendency to develop blocked oil glands. That is why continuing warm compresses after the stye goes away will help to prevent more styes from developing in the future.

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