

Sty

Definition

- A sty is a red lump or pimple on the edge of an eyelid

Health Information

Symptoms

- A tender, red lump on the eyelid at the base of an eyelash
- Can turn into a small pimple
- A sty is tender to touch
- A sty causes mild swelling of the eyelid
- A sty can cause a watery eye

Causes

- An infection of the hair follicle of an eyelash.
- The most common cause is the Staph bacteria.

Prevention

- Do not touch the eyes with dirty hands (especially after picking the nose.) Reason: The nose is the most frequent home of Staph bacteria.
- Do not rub the eyes if you have a sty. Reason: Rubbing can cause more styes to occur.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- A sty is a minor infection of an eyelash.
- Most styes can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Moist Heat:

- Put a warm, wet washcloth on the eye. Do this for 10 minutes 3 times a day. Reason: This helps the sty come to a head.
- Continue the warm wet cloth even after the sty begins to drain. Reason: To help remove the discharge and heal the sty.

3. Open the Pimple:

- Age limit: Your child is over 5 years old and cooperative.
- When the center of the sty becomes yellow, you can open it. Do this by using tweezers. Pull out the eyelash that goes through the pimple. This will start drainage and healing.
- Another option is to wait for drainage to start on its own. Most often, this occurs in another 1-2 days.
- Caution: Do not squeeze the red lump. Reason: This can cause an eyelid infection.

4. **Antibiotic Eye Medicine:**

- Most single styes respond to the treatment with moist heat. They don't need prescription antibiotic eyedrops.
- If there is more than one sty, your child may need an antibiotic. Also, antibiotics eyedrops may be needed if styes keep coming back. This usually happens to children who rub their eyes often.
- Use the eye drops as directed.

5. **Contact Lenses:**

- Children who wear contact lenses need to switch to glasses until the sty heals.
- Reason: To prevent damage to the cornea.
- Disinfect the contacts before wearing them again.
- Discard them if they are disposable.

6. **What to Expect:**

- A sty usually comes to a head and forms a pimple in 3 to 5 days.
- Most often, it drains and heals in a few more days.

7. **Return To School:**

- Children with a sty usually do not need to miss any school.

Call Your Doctor If

- Eyelid gets red or swollen
- Sty comes to a head, but does not drain by 3 days
- More styes occur
- Sty is not gone by 10 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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