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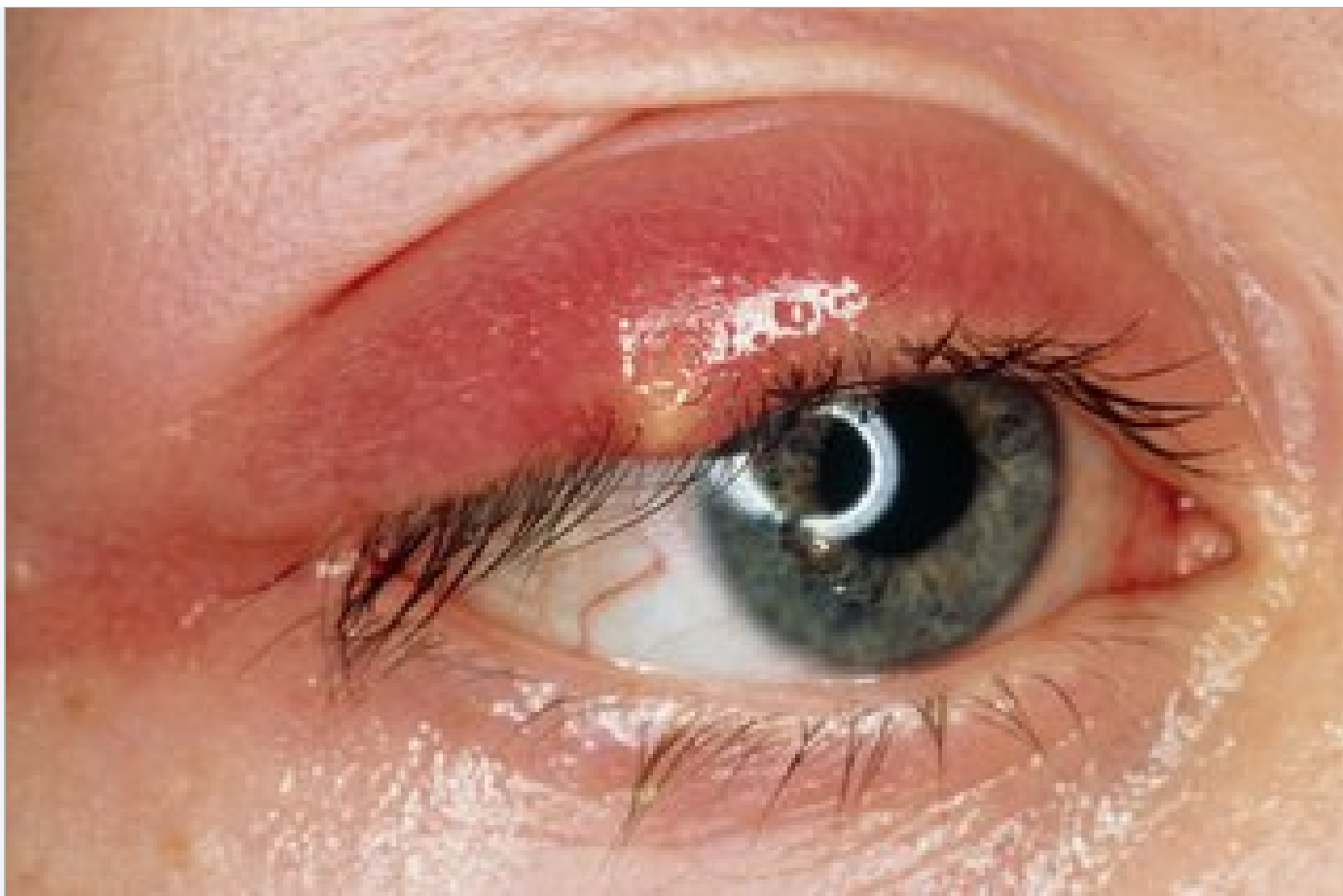
Stye

Styes are common and should clear up on their own within a week or 2. They're rarely a sign of anything serious, but may be painful until they heal.

Check if you have a stye



A stye is a small, painful lump on or inside the eyelid or around the eye.



The skin may be red, swollen and filled with yellow pus, like a pimple.



Your eye may be red and watery but your vision should not be affected.

A sty usually only affects 1 eye, but it's possible to have more than 1 at a time.

It's probably not a sty if:

- there's no lump – if your eye or eyelid is swollen, red and watery it's more likely to be conjunctivitis or blepharitis
- the lump is hard but not very painful – it's more likely to be a chalazion

How to treat a sty

To reduce swelling and help the sty heal:

1. Soak a clean flannel in warm water.
2. Hold it against your eye for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Repeat this 3 or 4 times a day.

To relieve the pain, take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Do not give aspirin to children under 16.

Avoid wearing contact lenses and eye make-up until the sty has burst and healed.

See a GP if your sty:

- is very painful or swollen
- does not get better within a few weeks
- affects your vision

Treatment from a GP

If you have a sty, your GP may:

- burst the sty with a thin, sterilised needle
- remove the eyelash closest to the sty
- refer you to an eye specialist in hospital

Sty prevention

You cannot always prevent a sty. Styes are often caused by bacteria infecting an eyelash follicle or eyelid gland.

You're also more likely to get a sty if you have long-term blepharitis.

You can help avoid styes by keeping your eyes clean.

Do not try to burst a sty or remove an eyelash yourself. This can spread the infection.

Do

- ✓ wash your face regularly
- ✓ keep your eyelids and eyelashes clean, especially if you have blepharitis
- ✓ remove eye make-up before bed
- ✓ replace your eye make-up every 6 months

Don't

- ✗ do not share towels or flannels with someone who has a sty
- ✗ do not rub your eyes if you have not recently washed your hands
- ✗ do not put contact lenses in before washing your hands

Content supplied by the [NHS](#) and adapted for Ireland by the HSE

Page last reviewed: 25 March 2021

Next review due: 25 March 2024

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 123.

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