

Sty (Hordeolum)

A small area of redness and pain on the margin of your eyelid may indicate that you have a sty, known in medical terms as an external hordeolum. A sty is a blocked gland at the edge of the lid that has become infected by bacteria, usually *Staphylococcus aureus*.

The area of redness and pain will eventually form a 'point'. Until this occurs, warm compresses should be applied to the area for 15 minutes three-to-four times a day. The compresses should be followed by the application of an antibiotic ointment to the sty, available by prescription. Check with your ophthalmologist.

Once the sty has 'pointed', it can usually be expressed (squeezed gently to empty its contents), after which the lids should be cleaned. Treatment with the antibiotic should be continued until symptoms have cleared. Sometimes it is necessary for the sty to be lanced to assist with expression.