

# STYE

## What is a stye?

A stye is an infection of the area where an eyelash is attached to the eye (hair follicle). It is usually caused by Staphylococcus bacteria. The stye will look like a red bump at the base of an eyelash and will be tender.

## How long does it last?

It usually comes to a head and forms a pimple in 3 to 5 days. In a few more days, it usually drains and heals. Recurrences are common in children who rub their eyes.

## How can I take care of my child?

- **Antibiotic eye ointment**  
The ointments do not cure styes, but they make keep them from spreading and recurring.
- **Cleansing and warm compresses**  
Wash the eyelids daily with an antibacterial soap (like Dial or Safeguard). Apply a warm washcloth to the eye for 10 minutes four times a day to help the stye come to a head. Continue to cleanse the eye several times a day even after the stye drains.
- **Opening the pimple**  
When the stye does display a center of pus, open it by pulling out the eyelash that comes out of the pimple with a tweezers. Your other option is just to continue using warm compresses. Most styes will drain spontaneously in a few days after they come to a head.
- **Prevention**  
Ask your child not to touch his eyes because rubbing can cause spread of the infection to other eyelashes.

## When should I call my child's health care provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The eyelid becomes very red and causes a fever

Call during office hours if:

- The stye is not draining or improved by 3 days
- The stye is not completely healed by 10 days
- You have other concerns or questions