

BY SUZANNAH WEISS FEBRUARY 9, 2018



Why You Should Never Pop That Red, Tender Bump Near Your Eye

Eye styes look like a zit, but you need to keep your hands off

There are all sorts of bumps that can pop up on your face: Everything from zits on your chin to **cold sores on your lips**, there's no shortage of lesions that can take up residence on your mug.

But few are as disconcerting or as annoying as the eye stye, which are tender, red bumps that grow on your eyelids. They *could* look like zits, but as tempting as they may be to pop, you need to resist the urge.

Here, everything you need to know about the red, painful bumps that occur on your eyelids.

What is an eye stye?

Eye styes aren't serious, but they should be treated promptly.

Eye styes can spring up when bacteria gets into your eyelids' meibomian glands, which play a role in eye lubrication. This bacteria often comes from your eyelashes, especially if you're experiencing a buildup of eyelash bacteria known as blepharitis, which causes a crusty buildup at their base, says ophthalmologist and laser eye surgeon Ming Wang, M.D., Ph.D.

The telltale sign of an eye stye is a bump along your eyelid, says Dr. Wang. In the beginning, it will likely be red or painful to touch. Over time, it may become less sensitive, less red, and firmer. They usually occur on the outside of your eyelid, or on the bottom portion.

Eye styes don't usually affect your eyesight, though in some cases, they could cause astigmatism, which may blur your vision, says Dr. Wang. They could also lead your eyelid to droop, blocking your vision. Both these issues will go away once the eye stye does.

How to get rid of eye styes

If you think you might have an eye stye, see a doctor. They'll likely prescribe oral antibiotics, though prescription eye drops sometimes also work, says Dr. Wang. To avoid getting reinfected, complete this treatment even if the eye stye resolves.

As the infection's clearing up, you can minimize the pain and speed up the healing process by holding a warm compress like the [BRUDER Moist Heat Eye Compress](#) on your eye for five minutes up to five times a day, says Dr. Wang. You can also make your own compress by soaking a washcloth in warm water or microwaving a sock filled with uncooked rice. The moist warmth can help encourage the infection to drain.



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In rare cases when these methods don't work, a doctor can remove the growth through an injection or surgery.

Whatever you do, don't pop it—and we really mean that. Popping an eye styelike has the potential to be riskier than popping a zit. That's because the infection might spread to other parts of your eyelid or create cuts or abrasions in your skin, which give opening for other infections to enter, says Dr. Wang. It could even spread to your eye itself or, in rare cases, your brain, which can be fatal.

How to prevent eye styes

When you wash your face, Dr. Wang recommends gently going over your eyelids with warm water and mild soap, baby shampoo, or an eyelid cleanser like **Ocusoft Lid Scrub** once a day. This will help make sure the follicles are kept clear and not clogging up.

Eye styes themselves are rarely contagious, he adds. So you don't really have to worry about catching it from someone—unless he or she rubs the eye while the infection is draining, which should be avoided at all costs.