Sty (Hordeolum)

http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu/Handouts/sty/sty.html

GENERAL INFORMATION

- A sty is a small abscess of the glands in the eyelids (near the root of an eyelash) which can occur externally and internally. This abscess is generally a localized staphylococcal infection and you may get more than one sty at a time or several in succession.

- Sties respond well to treatment, but can recur. If untreated, sties can eventually lead to cellulitis of the eyelids, a more serious condition. They are neither contagious nor a sign of cancer.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Redness, swelling, and pain in a localized area of the eye.

- An external sty may be noted when there is a tender red nodule present below the lid margin; an internal sty may not have a visible nodule.

- Slightly blurred vision.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

- An examination of the eye generally confirms this infection.

- Many sties will drain on their own, but to facilitate the drainage of the abscess and reduce pain, a folded clean cloth can be used as a compress. The compress should be dipped in warm water, wrung out until just a little dripping remains, and applied to the eye. Dip the folded cloth repeatedly to keep the compress wet and warm. Continue the application of the compresses for 10-15 minutes. Using a clean cloth each time, apply the warm compresses 4 times a day for 3 to 4 days.

- Drug therapy can be prescribed by your health care provider. Do not use any medicine (including over-the-counter remedies) without checking with your health care provider. Generally, drug therapy includes antibiotic eye drops/ointment and, occasionally, an antibiotic taken by mouth. Carefully follow the directions prescribed by your health care provider.

- If a sty does not drain spontaneously with compress application, visit your health care provider for assistance. Do <u>not</u> attempt to squeeze or drain the sty yourself. This will spread the infection and may cause cellulitis. Have your eye rechecked if symptoms persist after several days of treatment.