

# Today's Picture Puzzler- What's causing this eyelid swelling?



What's causing this child's eyelid swelling?

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie..."

Actually, that's not amore, but that's a stye on this child's upper eyelid.

A stye (medical term = hordeolum) pops up seemingly overnight, although sometimes the child feels some tenderness at the eyelashes a day or two before it appears. Styes are tiny infections of eyelid glands that are self-limited and easily treated with warm wet compresses. We instruct patients to apply a clean, warm, wet cloth to the stye for 5-10 minutes four times per day.

Styes tend to improve after a few days but can take up to two

weeks to completely resolve.

Persistent styes may actually be chalazions. Chalazions, the result of a dysfunctional eyelid gland, are firm and are not tender. They tend to “point” toward the inside of the eyelid rather than outward.

Insect bites may also masquerade as styes. However, insect bites are itchy rather than painful.



stye: the view from the inside

Reasons to call your child's doctor:

- the entire eyelid is red, painful, and swollen
- pain is felt inside the eye itself
- child is sensitive to light
- child has vision changes
- the inside white part of your child's eye becomes red
- stye lasts more than two weeks despite treatment with warm compresses

Julie Kardos, MD and Naline Lai, MD

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With special thanks to Dean Martin

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# Spot the rash of ringworm

Although it's called ringworm, this rash isn't caused by a worm. In fact, it barely looks like a worm. Otherwise known as tinea corporis, the patch of ringworm is usually a flesh or light-pink colored, slightly scaly oval with raised, red edges.



Caused by a fungus, sometimes the patch is itchy. The same organism also causes athlete's foot (tinea pedis), jock itch (tinea cruris), and scalp infections (tinea capitis).

Ringworm falls into the mostly-harmless-but-annoying category of skin rashes (cover it up and no one will

notice). Your child's doctor will diagnose the rash by examining your child's skin. To treat the rash, apply antifungal medication until the rash is gone for at least 48 hours (about two to three weeks duration). Clotrimazole (for example, brand name Lotrimin) is over-the-counter and is applied twice daily. You will find it in the anti-athlete's foot section.

On the scalp, ringworm causes hair loss where the rash occurs. Treatment is not so straight forward. Ringworm on the scalp requires a prescription oral antifungal medication for several weeks. The fungus on the scalp lives not only on the skin, but also in hair follicles. So, topical antifungals fail to reach the infection.

Ringworm spreads through direct contact. Wrestling teams are often plagued with this infection. Cats may carry ringworm. If your family cat has signs of feline ring worm such as patches of hair loss, take him to the vet for diagnosis.

If your child's "ringworm" fails to improve after a week of applying antifungal medication, have your child's doctor examine (or re-examine) the rash. Other diagnoses we keep in mind include eczema and granuloma annulare. If the rash continues to enlarge we consider Lyme disease.

Kids are allowed to attend school and daycare with ringworm once treatment is started. Wrestlers are advised to cover the rash for the first three days of treatment.

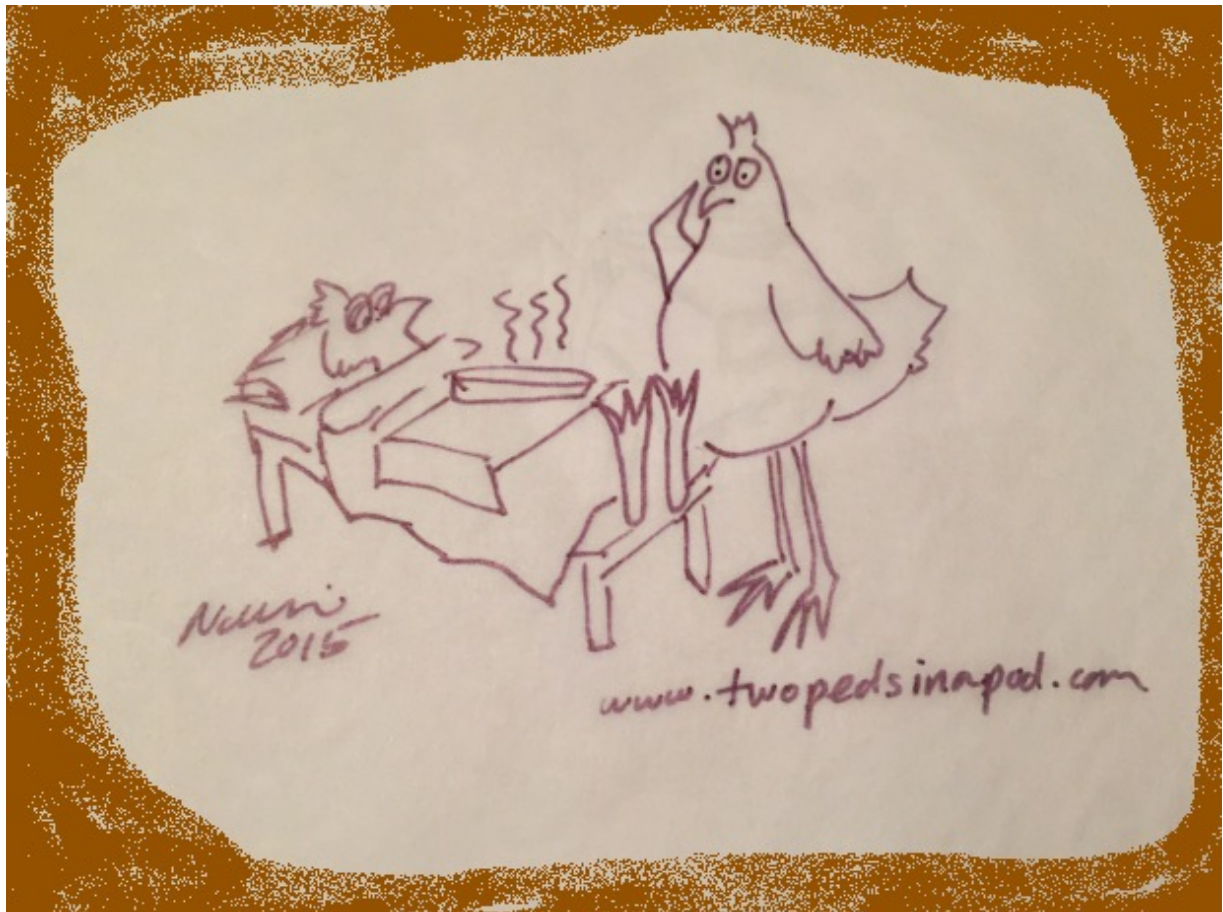
The sooner you start to treat ringworm, the more quickly it resolves. Just remember, "the early bird catches the..." oh, never mind.

Naline Lai, MD and Julie Kardos, MD

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# Flu or a cold? How to tell the difference



“Now what kind of soup did the doctor recommend? Was that tomato soup? Mushroom barley?”

Happy New Year and welcome to Flu Season 2017! Parents ask us every day how they can tell if their child has the flu a cold. Here's how:

**Colds, even really yucky ones, start out gradually.** Think back to your last cold: first your throat felt scratchy or sore, then the next day your nose got stuffy or then started running profusely, then you developed a cough. Sometimes during a cold you get a fever for a few days. Sometimes you get hoarse and lose your voice. Kids are the same way. In addition, they often feel tired because of interrupted sleep

from cough or nasal congestion. This tiredness leads to extra crankiness.

Usually kids still feel well enough to play and attend school with colds, as long as they well enough to participate. The average length of a cold is 7-10 days although sometimes it takes two weeks or more for all coughing and nasal congestion to resolve.

**Important news flash about mucus:** the mucus from a cold can be thick, thin, clear, yellow, green, or white, and can change from one to the other, all in the same cold. The color of mucus does NOT tell you if your child needs an antibiotic and will not help you differentiate between a cold and the flu.

**The flu, caused by influenza virus, comes on suddenly** and makes you feel as if you've been hit by a truck. Flu always causes fever of 101°F or higher and some respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, cough, or sore throat (many times, all three). Children, more often than adults, sometimes will vomit and have diarrhea along with their respiratory symptoms, but contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as "stomach flu." In addition to the usual respiratory symptoms, the flu causes body aches, headaches, and often the sensation of your eyes burning. The fever usually lasts 5-7 days. All symptoms come on at once; there is nothing gradual about coming down with the flu.

So, if your child has a runny nose and cough, but is drinking well, playing well, sleeping well and does not have a fever and the symptoms have been around for a few days, the illness is unlikely to "turn into the flu."

**Remember: colds = gradual and annoying. Flu = sudden and miserable.**

**Fortunately, a vaccine against the flu** is available for all kids over 6 months old (unfortunately, the vaccine isn't effective in younger babies) that can prevent the misery of the flu. In addition, vaccines against influenza save lives by preventing flu-related complications that can be fatal such as pneumonia, encephalitis (brain infection), and severe dehydration. Even though we are starting to see a lot of flu, it is not too late to get the flu vaccine for your child, so



please schedule a flu vaccine ASAP if your child has not yet received one for this season. Parents and caregivers should also immunize themselves- we all know how well a household functions when Mom or Dad have the flu... not very well!

Be sure to [read our guest article on ways to prevent colds and flu](#) and our thoughts on [over the counter cold medicines](#). Now excuse us while we go out to buy yummy-smelling hand soap to entice our kids to wash germs off their hands. After that you'll find us cooking up a pot of good old-fashioned chicken soup, just in case...

Julie Kardos, MD and Naline Lai, MD  
revised from our 2009 and 2015 posts

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## Last Minute Holiday Gifts Ideas

We're on Happy Healthy Kids!

*12 Healthy Gift Ideas*

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## We give thanks, 2016

Nearly seven years ago, on the swimming pool bleachers at the local Y, I happened to sit next to Lexi Logan. Above the echoing din of kids splashing, I discovered that although she

was trained as a painter, Lexi was interested in branching out into photography. Coincidentally, Dr Kardos and I were interested in branching medicine out into a new media called the internet and were dismayed at the lack of publicly available photos to accompany our blog posts. Lexi and I intersected in the right place at the right time. Since that chance meeting, Lexi has generously shared dozens of photos with Two Peds in a Pod.

The woman in the photo below, between your Two Peds (Dr. Kardos with the curly hair, Dr. Lai with the straight hair), is our photographer extraordinaire, Lexi Logan. Her work, which you can check out at [www.lexilogan.com](http://www.lexilogan.com), speaks for itself. Local peeps may want to contact her to take their own family photos.

This Thanksgiving we say thanks to all those parents we've ever sat next to on bleachers. All the kid-related information we have learned, from navigating chorus uniforms, bus stop times, best teachers, fun summer camps, and even starting up blogs, has been invaluable.

In particular- thank you, Lexi!

We wish all of our readers a very healthy and happy Thanksgiving,

Dr. Naline Lai with Dr. Julie Kardos

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**When your child says, “My belly hurts”**



*This week Two Peds joined Kelley on her blog Happy Health Kids as she talked about the dreaded phrase, "My belly hurts."*

*www.twopedsinapod.com*

*A teen shows off an old scar from the removal of an appendix.*

If I crunched the numbers on how often my kids have uttered certain phrases, "my belly hurts," ranks pretty darn high. So common is this refrain, and typically uneventful the outcome, that there's a cry-wolf quality to it; I typically point my child towards the pantry or bathroom and go about my day. But sometimes, a stomachache persists, and then figuring out the cause can be like falling into a rabbit hole (and equally unpleasant)....[click here to continue](#)

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**Text me... for my daughter  
going off to college**



*Today , Dr. Lai shares with us the texting guidelines she will be giving to her daughter as she goes away for college (wasn't kindergarten just yesterday?). We can all learn from this list.*

*–Dr. Kardos*

Text me to share a funny meme.

Text me to wish me a happy birthday and then follow it with a call.

Text me if you are about to go over our shared data plan.

Text me if you are deciding whether to study abroad.

Text me sooner than the day before spring break about your spring break plans.

Text me if you are unhappy about a break-up...even if you forgot to tell me you were going out in the first place.

Text me if you have a cold. I know you know what to do, but it will make us both feel better if I tell you to get good rest and hydrate well.

Text me if you are changing majors...but not before you have a plan for a new major

Text me if you find the essentials of life: "eat, sleep, drink, pee, poop," difficult. Especially the poop—no one will ever obsess about your bowels like a mother (except maybe a grandmother).

Text me when you are not in class (because I know you will be paying rapt attention to your professors and sucking every last bit of paid knowledge out of their craniums).

Text me sometimes at 1am with the understanding that I will be texting you sometimes at 7 am.

Text me to ask for the phone number of your dentist, but do not ask me to schedule the appointment for you.

Do not text and ask me to email your professors.

Do not text me to ask about your clothing choices for the day...unless you just want me to say you look beautiful.

Do not text me asking for college housing deadline information; you have the same access to the internet as I do. Plus, you are actually on campus!

Do text me to complain about the 4 loads of laundry you did all Saturday afternoon -it makes me happy to see you can survive on your own- and I promise not to lecture you on how you allowed the laundry to pile up.

And of course, text me out of the blue just to say ♥️.

Mom

aka Naline Lai, MD

## Poison Ivy: Soothe the itch



Teach your child to recognize poison ivy: “leaves of three, let’em be!”

Recently we’ve had a parade of itchy children troop through our office. The culprit: poison ivy.

Myth buster: Fortunately, **poison ivy is NOT contagious**. You can catch poison ivy **ONLY** from the plant, not from another person.

Also, **contrary to popular belief, you can not spread poison ivy on yourself through scratching**. However, where the poison (oil) has touched your skin, your skin can show a delayed reaction- sometimes up to two weeks later. Different areas of skin can react at different times, thus giving the illusion of a spreading rash.



Some home remedies for the itch :

- **Hopping into the shower and rinsing off within fifteen minutes** of exposure can curtail the reaction. Warning, a bath immediately after exposure may cause the oils to simply swirl around the bathtub and touch new places on your child.
- **Hydrocortisone 1%.** This is a mild topical steroid which decreases inflammation. We suggest the ointment- more staying power and unlike the cream will not sting on open areas, use up to four times a day
- **Calamine lotion – a.k.a. the pink stuff.** This is an active ingredient in many of the combination creams. Apply as many times as you like.
- **Diphenhydramine (brand name Benadryl)- take orally** up to every six hours. If this makes your child too sleepy, once a day Cetirizine (brand name Zyrtec) also has very good anti itch properties.
- **Oatmeal baths** – Crush oatmeal, place in old hosiery, tie it off and float in the bathtub- this will prevent oat meal from clogging up your bath tub. Alternatively buy the commercial ones (e.g. Aveeno)
- **Do not use alcohol or bleach**– these items will irritate the rash more than help

The biggest worry with poison ivy rashes is not the itch, but the chance of infection. With each scratch, your child is possibly introducing infection into an open wound. Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between an allergic reaction to poison ivy and an infection. Both are red, both can be warm, both can be swollen. However, **infections cause pain** – if there is pain associated with a poison ivy rash, think infection. **Allergic reactions cause itchiness**– if there is itchiness associated with a rash, think allergic reaction. Because it usually takes time for an infection to “settle in,” an infection will not occur immediately after an exposure. Infection usually

occurs on the 2nd or 3rd day of scratching. If you have any concerns take your child to her doctor.

Generally, any poison ivy rash which is in the area of the eye or genitals (difficult to apply topical remedies), appears infected, or is just plain making your child miserable needs medical attention.

When all else fails, comfort yourself with this statistic: up to 85% of people are allergic to poison ivy. If misery loves company, your child certainly has company.

Naline Lai, MD and Julie Kardos, MD

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# **Time out from summer for an important flu update**





Time out from summer for a flu update

We interrupt your summer to bring you a Flu vaccine reminder and update.

Although flu (influenza) may be far from your minds, as we enter hot July, pediatricians are already ordering flu vaccines in preparation for Back to School. When the time comes, parents should add “schedule flu vaccine” to their back-to-school list as flu vaccines will arrive in offices as early as late August. Even immunizations given in August will last the entire winter season.

For fans of the nasal spray version of the flu vaccine—bad news. Turns out, data from the past 3 years shows the nasal spray is not nearly as effective as the injectable version. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Center for Immunization Practices both recommend giving only the injectable version of flu prevention for protection against influenza.

Nonetheless, for the inconvenience of a pinch, the vaccine is still worthwhile. A total of 77 children died from flu in the

US during the 2015-2016 flu season and many more children were hospitalized with flu related complications such as pneumonia and dehydration. Flu is highly contagious and spreads rapidly within households and schools, including daycare centers. People are contagious from flu one day prior to showing any symptoms of flu.

While most people who become sick with the flu survive, they will tell you it is a tough week. In addition to having a high fever that can last 5-7 days, a hacking cough, and runny nose, those stricken will tell you that every part of their bodies hurt. Even the movement of their eyes can hurt. In addition to the physical effects, our high school and college level patients are particularly distraught about the amount of schoolwork they miss while recovering from the flu.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, which is why the flu vaccine is so terrific. There is no “cure” for the flu- you have to let your body fight it out. Unfortunately antiviral medications such as oseltamivir at best shorten the duration of flu symptoms by about one day. Flu vaccines work by jump starting your body’s natural immune system to produce disease fighting cells called antibodies. Vaccines are given yearly because flu virus strains often morph between flu seasons.

For more Two Peds In a Pod posts about flu and about vaccines in general: How to tell the difference between the common cold and the flu, Fact or Fiction: a flu vaccine quiz, Getting back to basics: how vaccines work.

OK, now back to your summer fun!

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# Bring on the heat: Hot Tub Folliculitis



Note that the hot tub folliculitis rash is worse under the area of the swimming suit at the top of the thigh.

From the start, a family I know was suspicious of the hot tub sanitation at the resort where they recently stayed. As time went by, even though the water looked clear, the hot tub seemed less chlorinated, and the water more tepid. They dubbed

the tub “the scuz tub.” After their return, one of the kids broke out in the rash of hot tub folliculitis pictured above. You could say, they figured out just what the “scuz wuz”.

Hot tub folliculitis is a skin rash caused by a bacteria called *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. The rash appears a day or two after soaking in a hot tub. A light pink bump appears around hair follicles (hence the name). As you can see in this photo, the rash is typically worse on areas of skin where bacteria was trapped under a swimming suit. The rash can cover all body surfaces, including the face, if your child dunked his head under water.

The rash can be slightly itchy but is not usually painful. No other symptoms develop such as fever or sore throat. The rash is not contagious, but often other people who swam in the same hot tub also break out.

Treatment is to wait it out. Typically by one to two weeks, provided your child does not go back into the hot tub, the rash resolves on its own. If your child feels very itchy, you can treat her with oral diphenhydramine (brand name Benedryl). Rarely, just like mosquito bites, the rash can become infected with other bacteria if your child scratches too much.

*Pseudomonas* thrives in warm wet places. In fact, it’s the same bacteria that causes “[swimmer’s ear](#).” Tight control of chlorine and acid content of the hot tub water limit the growth of the bacteria. Unfortunately, you cannot tell the *Pseudomonas* content of water just by eyeing it.

May you bring back a better souvenir than this family did on your next vacation.

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