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

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