



KATIE BRINDLE

## Stye Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



# Overview

A Stye, also known as a hordeolum or chalazion, is an infection of the oil glands in the eyelid, leading to a painful, red swelling near the edge of the eyelid. In Western medicine, Styes are often attributed to bacterial infections, particularly Staphylococcus bacteria. From a Chinese Medicine perspective, Styes are seen as a manifestation of internal Heat and Dampness, often combined with Qi stagnation and exacerbated by invasion of Wind. They are considered to be an external symptom of an internal imbalance, particularly related to the Liver and Spleen meridians.

# Causes

- **Wind-Heat Invasion:** In Chinese Medicine, external pathogenic factors, such as Wind and Heat, can invade the body through the skin and meridians. The eye, being an opening, is particularly vulnerable to these invasions so Wind, along with Heat to the eyelids, can result in the inflammation, redness and swelling characteristic of a Stye.
- **Damp-Heat Accumulation:** Dampness refers to a pathogen that can hamper the body's normal functions, most usually the result of Spleen Qi deficiency and poor dietary habits such as over consumption of spicy, greasy or sweet foods. When Heat combines with this Dampness it can create a sticky and hot landscape which is a perfect breeding ground for bacteria, infection and the formation of a Stye.

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- Liver Heat or Fire: The Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of Qi, blood and emotions throughout the body. Emotional stress, anger, or frustration can lead to Liver Qi stagnation which, over time, can generate Heat or even turn into Fire, a more severe pathogen. As the Liver meridian flows through the eyes, this Heat can manifest as eye problems, including the formation of a Stye.

## Organs Implicated

- Liver: In Chinese Medicine the Liver opens into the eyes, which means that eye health is directly related to the harmonious functioning of the Liver. Any imbalance or disharmony in Liver Qi can manifest as various eye problems, including Styes. Liver Heat, or Fire in extreme cases, resulting from prolonged frustration or anger, can express itself as a Stye due to the internal Heat rising up to the eye area where the Liver meridian flows. As the Heat is often extreme, it will then cause the swelling and inflammation that we recognise as a Stye. The Liver also stores blood, which nourishes the eyes, so any deficiency in Liver blood, can cause the eyes to become dry and vulnerable to infections.
- Spleen: When it comes to eye health, a deficiency in Spleen Qi can lead to an impaired ability to process and transport fluids effectively, resulting in the accumulation of Dampness in the body which, when combined with Heat, creates the perfect situation for infections to manifest. Additionally, the Spleen's critical role in fluid metabolism means that any failure to control body fluids properly can lead to Damp conditions around the eyes, further contributing to the development of Styes.

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# Emotions

Chronic emotional stress can severely disrupt the flow of Qi in the body. Each organ has specific negative emotions attached to it which, if left unresolved, can manifest as physical problems:

- Anger and Frustration (Liver): The Liver is closely linked to our emotional state, especially the negative emotions of the Liver, which are anger and frustration. When these emotions are not properly managed and are allowed to gain a foothold, they can lead to Liver Qi stagnation, disrupting the smooth flow of Qi and blood throughout the body. This stagnation, over time, can generate internal Heat which, if not dealt with, may rise to the eyes via the Liver meridian, eventually manifesting as eye conditions. Prolonged, unresolved emotional disharmony can intensify this Heat, amplifying symptoms and potentially creating a recurring condition.
- Worry and Overthinking (Spleen): The Spleen is particularly sensitive to emotions such as worry and overthinking, so when burdened with excessive worry, Spleen Qi can become compromised, weakening its ability to efficiently process and transport bodily fluids. This impairment can lead to an accumulation of Dampness, potentially contributing to issues such as Styes.

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# Acupressure

Acupressure is a technique that can easily be performed as part of your self-care practices. Gentle pressure is applied to specific points on the body with fingers or an acupressure tool to help clear blockages in the meridians, the pathways of the body through which Qi flows.

## GB-2 (Tīnghuì)

Location: In front of the ear, in the depression formed when the mouth is opened.

Why: This point is directly linked to the Gallbladder meridian, which intersects with pathways affecting the eyes. Stimulating GB-2 is beneficial in clearing Liver and Gallbladder Heat, reducing inflammation and benefiting eye health, making it particularly useful for addressing the Heat aspect of Styes.

## ST-2 (Sìbái)

Location: With the eyes looking directly forward, this point is on the upper cheek, about one thumb width directly below the pupil.

Why: ST-2 is part of the Stomach meridian, which passes through the face, affecting the eyes. Gently stimulating this point can help to dispel Wind and clear Heat from the channel, directly benefitting the eyes and helping to alleviate conditions such as a Stye.

## LIV-3 (Tàichōng)

Location: Found on the top of the foot, in the fleshy webbing between the big toe and the second toe, approximately two thumb-widths from the edge of the webbing.

Why: A crucial point on the Liver meridian, LIV-3 is renowned for its ability to regulate and soothe Liver Qi, easing stress, Heat and emotional tension, thereby addressing one of the root causes of the formation of Styes.

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### SP-6 (Sānyīnjiāo)

Location: This point is located on the inner side of the lower leg. To find it, place four fingers above your inner ankle bone. The point lies just behind the shin bone (tibia), in a tender area often found just above the highest peak of the inner ankle bone.

Why: SP-6 is a key acupressure point on the Spleen meridian, also connected to the Liver and Kidney meridians. Gently stimulating this point strengthens the Spleen, helps to resolve Dampness and ensures the smooth flow of Qi and blood. All of which helps to address the Spleen's role in the occurrence of Styes.

## Yang Sheng Practices

There are many practices, lifestyle choices, self-care tools and supplements that can be used to help manage the symptoms and the root cause of Styes, including:

- **Stress Management:** Stress, especially when chronic, can lead to Liver Qi stagnation, disrupting the free flow of Qi and blood and potentially contributing to the conditions that allow the development of Styes. Self-care techniques such as meditation and breathwork can help to manage this stress by calming the mind, lessening emotional turmoil and restoring the smooth flow of Liver Qi, thereby mitigating one of the key factors that can lead to poor eye health.
- **Qigong:** Specific qigong exercises that focus on eye movements (such as Tibetan eye exercises) can be extremely beneficial in promoting the circulation of Qi and blood to the eye area, strengthening the related organs and alleviating the symptoms and formation of Styes.

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- Gua Sha: To treat and avoid future Styes, very gentle facial gua sha can be particularly beneficial, helping to stimulate the acupressure points around the eye area, increasing local circulation, reducing inflammation and clearing blood stagnation.
- Warm Compresses or Poultices: The gentle application of a warm compress on the affected eye can help to alleviate the pain and swelling associated with a Stye due to the warmth improving circulation to the area, promoting healing by reducing inflammation and encouraging the Stye to drain naturally. A clean lint-free cloth, soaked in warm tea such as chrysanthemum, chamomile or green tea, can be gently applied to the closed eyelid for a few minutes several times a day until symptoms ease.
- Hygiene and Eye Care: Maintaining good eye hygiene is vital in preventing the formation of Styes. Avoid touching or rubbing the eye area with dirty hands and keep the eyelid as clean as possible. Contact wearers should ensure their lenses are properly cleaned and handled to avoid inadvertently introducing bacteria into the eye area. When outside, consider wearing sunglasses to protect the eyes not only from the sun, but also Wind.
- Avoiding Eye Strain: Limit activities that strain the eyes, such as prolonged screen time, exposure to lights that are too bright or reading in light that is too dim. Ensure regular breaks during activities that require intense focus, practice eye relaxation exercises and ensure appropriate lighting to reduce eye strain. If nothing else, regularly gaze into the distance to rest the eyes and nurture the Liver or place cupped hands over the eye area for a few moments.
- Adequate Rest: Proper rest and sleep are essential for the body's healing processes and for maintaining the balance of Yin and Yang, especially if you are experiencing eye strain or fatigue, as these can contribute to the development of Styes.

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# Useful Supplements

There are many helpful supplements that can be taken as both preventative self-care and to alleviate symptoms of Styes, these include:

- **Chrysanthemum Tea:** Celebrated in Chinese Medicine for its cooling properties, chrysanthemum tea is regularly used to clear Heat, resolve Damp and soothe inflammation. As it helps to reduce Liver Heat and Damp-Heat within the body, it is able to alleviate the redness and swelling, and avoid the conditions that create the Stye in the first place. This tea can be consumed as a beverage or used as a poultice.
- **Goji Berries:** Rich in antioxidants, Goji Berries are considered a tonic for the Liver and Kidneys, and especially tonifying for the Spleen. As they nourish Yin and improve the smooth flow of Qi and blood, they assist in maintaining proper fluid metabolism, thereby preventing the Damp conditions that can lead to the formation of Styes.
- **Reishi Mushrooms:** Highly regarded for its immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties, Reishi is a powerful supplement in managing Damp-Heat conditions. By boosting the immune system and clearing internal Heat, Reishi mushrooms can help to prevent infections and inflammations that result in Styes.

## Conclusion

In Chinese Medicine, treating and preventing the occurrence of Styes involves addressing the underlying imbalances of Qi, Dampness and Heat, particularly in the Liver and Spleen meridians. A holistic approach, encompassing Yang Sheng techniques and self-care practices for good eye health will be essential to avoid Styes in the future.

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# Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey.

The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and [www.hayoumethod.com](http://www.hayoumethod.com)

Buy Yang Sheng Book

Healing Movement classes (3 x each week) and live meditations for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details [here](#)

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health. Find more Healing Masterclasses [here](#).

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram & the opportunity to purchase the accompanying tools from [www.hayoumethod.com](http://www.hayoumethod.com)

## DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit [www.hayoumethod.com](http://www.hayoumethod.com) to view our comprehensive FAQs.

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