

Pilonidal Cyst

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

What is a pilonidal cyst? A pilonidal cyst is a small sac under the skin. Pilonidal cysts may become infected and cause an abscess (collection of pus).

What causes a pilonidal cyst? Pilonidal cysts may be caused by an ingrown hair. A hair may become ingrown if it rubs against your skin. The friction can cause hair to dig into the skin and get trapped there.

What are the signs and symptoms of a pilonidal cyst? A pilonidal cyst may look like a small hole or dimple in the center of your lower back. It is usually located right above your buttocks. The pilonidal cyst may feel tender or painful after doing physical activities or sitting for a long period of time. The cyst may feel hot, and be red and swollen if it becomes infected. Pus may also drain from the cyst.

How is a pilonidal cyst diagnosed and treated? Your healthcare provider will examine you and ask about your symptoms. You may not need any treatment. A pilonidal cyst may go away on its own. If the cyst becomes infected, the pus may need to be drained. Your healthcare provider may make a small incision to drain the pus and pack it with gauze. Your cyst may need to be surgically removed if it becomes infected often. Another type of treatment is to remove the infected cyst through an endoscopic procedure. This is when a scope is used through a small incision.

How can I help prevent an infection?

- **Shave around the cyst.** This will prevent hairs from entering the cyst. Your healthcare provider may recommend laser hair removal.
- **Clean the cyst area as directed.** Your healthcare provider may recommend that you use a mild soap and rinse it well.
- **Do not sit for long periods of time.** This may cause the cyst to get irritated.

When should I contact my healthcare provider?

- You have a fever.
- Your cyst is red and swollen.
- Your cyst has pus draining from it.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

CARE AGREEMENT:

You have the right to help plan your care. Learn about your health condition and how it may be treated. Discuss treatment options with your healthcare providers to decide what care you want to receive. You always have the right to refuse treatment. The above information is an educational aid only. It is not intended as medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before following any medical regimen to see if it is safe and effective for you.

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