

What Is Pilonidal Cyst?

A pilonidal cyst is a chronic (lasting a long time) infection of the skin in the crease of the buttocks. This infection causes a cyst or abscess (swollen, sore area that may drain pus) to grow.

How do I know if I have Pilonidal Cyst?

Symptoms vary from a small dimple to a large painful mass. The area may also drain fluid (pus) that can be clear, cloudy or bloody. When an infection happens the area becomes red, sore, and the pus will have a foul odor.

Nearly all patients that have an abscess that goes away, either by itself or with medical help may grow a *pilonidal sinus*. The sinus is a cavity (space) below the skin that connects to the skin's surface with one or more small openings.

A small number of patients have repeat infections and inflammation of these sinus tunnels. The chronic disease causes events of swelling, pain, and drainage (leaking).

How can I fix it?

Treatment chosen depends on how bad the cysts are and how often they form. A single event (acute) of an abscess will be treated with an incision to let out pus (fluid) to reduce the swelling (inflammation) and pain. This procedure can often be done in the office with local anesthesia.

When you have a pilonidal sinus or a repeat cyst, surgery will be needed. The type of surgical procedure will depend on the situation. Procedures often include un-roofing (cutting out) the sinuses. The area is then either left open or closed with skin flaps.

If the wound is left open, a dressing (bandage) or packing is used to keep it clean.

How can I learn more?

You can also find information through the American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) at <http://www.fascrs.org/patients/conditions/>

Do you have any questions or comments for your doctor?

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Division of Colon & Rectal Surgery