

Pilonidal cysts and abscesses

Pilonidal means “nest of hair”. A pilonidal cyst is an abnormal sac that develops at the top of the buttocks, near the split (cleft). The sac contains skin and ingrown hairs. If the cyst gets infected, it is called a pilonidal abscess.

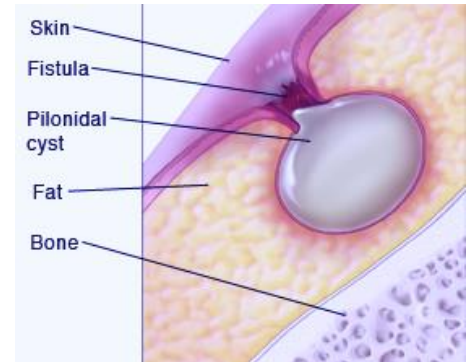
What causes a cyst to form?

- Hormone changes.
- Hair growth.
- Tight fitting clothes rubbing on the skin.
- Sitting for long periods of time.



What are the symptoms of an abscess?

- Pain, swelling, warmth and redness at the top of the buttock crease.
- Draining pus.
- Fever.



How is the abscess treated?

Early treatment may include sitting in a tub of warm water. This may decrease the pain. It may also help the abscess drain. An antibiotic may also be given.

If the abscess gets worse, surgery may be needed. The surgery is called an Incision and Drainage (I & D). It allows the pus to drain out, which will decrease the pain.

Antibiotics may be prescribed after the surgery.

What can be done to keep an abscess from coming back?

Good hygiene is very important.

- Shower every day. Use an antibacterial soap.
- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Do not sit for long periods of time.
- Avoid wearing tight fitting clothes.
- Keep the area free of hair.
 - Shave or use hair removal (depilatory) creams.
 - Have electrolysis or laser hair removal done.

If the abscess comes back, surgery may be needed to remove the cyst.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.