

Pilonidal Cyst

What is a pilonidal cyst?

A **pilonidal** [pahy-luh-NAHD-l] **cyst** is a fluid-filled sore usually found near the base of the tailbone.

What causes it?

The exact cause of a pilonidal cyst isn't always known. In most cases, the area where hair grows out of the skin gets infected. This often happens after sitting for long periods of time.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms most often include these things near the affected area of the skin:

- Swelling
- Pain
- Redness or changes in color
- Open, draining wound

How is it diagnosed?

A pilonidal cyst is diagnosed after your healthcare provider knows your symptoms and looks at the affected area.

What are possible problems?

A pilonidal cyst that isn't treated can:

- **Lead to a more serious infection.**
- **Cause severe pain.**
- **Return again and again.** The cause of pilonidal cysts doesn't go away on its own. Without surgery, it's common for them to come back again.

How is it treated?

Your healthcare provider can treat a pilonidal cyst by:

- Cutting it out.** This can be done with a simple surgery in the clinic to remove smaller cysts or in an operating room for larger cysts.
- Packing the wound with a sterile gauze** (bandaging) if it's deep.
- Treating the wound with Negative Pressure Wound Therapy.** This type of therapy involves covering the wound with a special bandage. The bandage helps heal the wound and protect it from infection.
- Regularly cleaning the wound and changing the bandage** until the skin is healed.
- Prescribing antibiotic medicine** to stop the infection. Your healthcare provider may test a sample of the fluid to know what germ caused the cyst. **Be sure to take the antibiotic medicine until it's all gone so the infection doesn't get worse or come back.**



When should I call a doctor?

Contact your doctor if you have:

- A fever
- Chills
- Redness occurring or spreading near the cyst
- Pain or swelling near the cyst that's getting worse

