

Pilonidal Cyst

Call the doctor NOW if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Is less than 3 months old and has a temperature over 100.3°F (38°C).
- Has a temperature over 104° F (40°C) or feels very hot at any age.
- Has worsening pain, swelling, redness, drainage, or bleeding from the area of the pilonidal cyst.
- Has muscle aches, dizziness, or does not feel well.

A pilonidal cyst is a small skin sac, or tunnel, near the bottom of the spine that may contain hair.

It is more common in young men with a lot of body hair but anyone can have a pilonidal cyst. The hairs may get trapped in the sac under the skin and cause an infection. Pilonidal cysts can go dormant for years at a time. Some people have flare-ups every month and some only get one every few years.

For painful, fluid-filled cysts the recommended treatment is to cut open the cyst to drain the fluid. This is called incision and drainage.

The doctor may place a drain or packing inside the wound after draining it. The drainage procedure does not remove the cyst. Your child's doctor will tell you how to take care of the wound. It is important to keep the area as free of hair as possible. Check with your child's doctor regarding options to keep the pilonidal cyst area hair free, for example laser hair removal, battery operated clippers, etc.

If the pilonidal cyst continues to become inflamed, you may want to consider excision surgery.

This is a procedure done in the operating room by a surgeon to remove the entire cyst. The surgical wound may be closed with sutures or it may be left open to heal from the inside. A Wound V.A.C.® may also be used to help with healing. A Wound V.A.C.® is a system that uses controlled negative pressure (vacuum) to help wound to heal by getting rid of infectious materials and other fluids from the wound. Please see Wound V.A.C.® for more information if needed.

For General Health Information and Resources:

Call or visit the [Family Resource Center](#), a health information library on the 3rd floor of the hospital. Call 314.454.2350, email at frc@bjc.org, or check out the FREE [St. Louis Children's Hospital Kid Care App](#).

