Information for Informed Consent
Treatment of Bartholin’s Duct Cyst Or Abscess

You have a Bartholin’s duct cyst. Before we treat you, you need to know some information about the condition and the options for treatment. You also need to know the possible benefits and risks of each type of treatment. We have listed these for you. We are happy to answer your questions.

What is a Bartholin’s duct cyst?
You have two Bartholin’s glands. There is one in each of your inner labia. They are on each side of the opening to the vagina. They are about the size of a pea. They make the fluid that lubricates the vagina during sex play. Each one has a tiny tube called a duct. It carries fluid from the gland to the vagina. Sometimes a duct gets blocked, the fluid backs up, and the gland swells up. This is called a cyst.

What are the symptoms?
There may be a round swelling in one of your labia. It can grow to the size of a golf ball. It may not be tender, but it can become very painful if it gets infected. Walking may become uncomfortable if that happens.

An infected cyst is also called an abscess. It’s usually caused by normal bacteria that live on the skin or in the vagina. Sometimes the infection is caused by a sexually transmitted bacteria that needs to be treated. We’ll test you to make sure.

Treatment
There are several treatments. Your clinician will help you decide which method is best for you based on the size of the cyst, how much pain you’re having, and if it is infected.

Incision and Drainage (I&D)
This is a quick way to treat a Bartholin’s cyst. We inject a small amount of numbing medicine into the area. We make a small cut into the cyst. It lets the fluid drain out. Sometimes, we need to put gauze packing into the opening. This is easy to do, but the cyst often builds up again.

Word Catheter
Word catheters are small rubber tubes. Using one can improve the success rate of I&D. The catheter is placed into the cyst after the I&D. You leave it in place for at least four weeks. This lets the fluid drain out and a new duct to form. You may notice the end of the tube that sticks out. If it bothers you, gently push it inside your vagina. You may be asked to soak in a warm tub (sitz bath) or apply warm compresses each day until your next office visit. Using a catheter is more effective than only doing I&D, but sometimes a cyst forms again after the catheter is removed. Then it has to be treated again. Sometimes the catheter falls out too soon. Then it has to be replaced.

Don’t have vaginal intercourse until the catheter is removed. If you do, it can be knocked out of place. Use a panty-liner or mini-pad to keep drainage from staining your clothing.

Marsupialization
Marsupialization is another way to make a new duct to drain the cyst. It is a minor surgical procedure. It is often done in a surgical center, but it can be done in some clinics. A numbing medicine is injected into the area, or you are given a general anesthesia to make you sleep. A cut is made through the skin and the wall of the cyst. The new duct is made by stitching the edges of the cuts together. Gauze packing may be placed into the
cyst. It is usually removed in a few days. Marsupialization is very effective, but sometimes a new duct closes up and a cyst forms again.

Use a panty-liner or mini-pad to keep drainage from staining your clothing. Most women have mild discomfort for a few days after marsupialization. Take ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Aleve®), acetaminophen (Tylenol®), or whatever prescription medication your clinician prescribes. You may be asked to soak in a warm tub (sitz baths) or to apply warm compresses every day, until your next office visit. You may start having vaginal intercourse when you feel comfortable again.

**Alternative Treatments**
Sometimes, treatment isn’t necessary — the clinician will simply check the cyst regularly to make sure it's not growing. Other times, a woman will be asked to soak the area in the shower, a tub of water (sitz bath), or with a warm, moist towel to see if it will drain on its own. You may also be given antibiotics.

**How can I keep from getting another Bartholin’s Gland Cyst?**
No treatment is 100 percent effective. A cyst or abscess may come back even after using a Word catheter or marsupialization. If it does come back, it can be treated again. It’s best to return for care as soon as you think the cyst has returned.

**Warning Signs — Call the health center if you have any questions or any unusual or unexpected symptoms, such as**
- fever — a temperature of 100.4°F or higher — that lasts more than four hours
- a swelling that increases or does not go down in three days
- redness or swelling that spreads beyond the immediate area of the cyst
- pain that is not relieved by acetaminophen or ibuprofen

**EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER**
OR 714.922.4122 | SB 909.915.2076

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Client Signature ____________________________ Date __________

I witness that the client received this information, said she read and understood it, and had an opportunity to ask questions.

Witness signature ____________________________ Date __________

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