

# Bartholin's Cyst and Abscess

Women's Health Service

Surname: ..... NHI: .....

First Names: .....

Date of Birth: ..... / ..... / ..... Sex: .....

PLACE PATIENT ID HERE



## What are Bartholin's cysts?

There are two small glands on each side of the vagina which secrete mucus. Ducts from the glands drain into the vaginal opening.

Sometimes the duct from the gland to the vagina can become blocked, mucus builds up and forms a cyst. These cysts are not usually painful but can cause discomfort during sexual intercourse or sitting.

Sometimes these cysts become infected causing a tender, hot swelling (an abscess).

## How are they treated?

Both the cyst and abscess may be treated by opening the ducts, draining the collected fluid and sewing it open with small dissolvable stitches to prevent it happening again. This is called marsupialisation (pouch making). A small amount of gauze packing may be left in the wound for about a day to assist drainage. This is done under a General Anaesthetic.

## Going home

You will usually be able to go home once you have made a full recovery from your anaesthetic. You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home. You should have someone to stay with you for the first 24 hours.

You may feel drowsy because a small amount of the anaesthetic may still remain in your body. This can slow your reaction time, coordination and affect your judgement for the next 24 hours. You should not drink alcohol, make any important decisions, sign any documents (including legal), drive a car, cycle, ride a motorbike or use heavy

machinery for at least 24 hours after your operation.

Some side effects following anaesthesia may include; sore/dry throat, or a slight cough. This usually resolves within a few days. Nausea, discomfort and tiredness are common side effects during the first few days following surgery.

## Looking after your wound

Wash the wound area with water twice a day and pat dry with a clean towel. Antibiotics may be prescribed for an infection. It is important that you take all the medicine prescribed and finish your course of antibiotics.

You will have a small amount of discharge from the wound for a few days and may need to wear pads.

Sometimes a cyst or abscess will recur in the same place or on the other side. If you notice the area is tender and /or swollen it may help to gently squeeze the area while you are in the bath or shower. A hot flannel held in place for 20 minutes two or three times a day may also decrease the swelling.

## Physical activity

You will need to take it easy for a day or two. You will usually be able to return to work within a couple of days when you are feeling well enough.

We advise you not to have sexual intercourse until the wound has healed and you have finished the course of antibiotics.

[Continued]

## **Complications to look out for**

We particularly want you to tell us if:-

- You have increasing or severe pain or swelling in the area.
- You have a fever (temperature).
- You are feeling sick or vomiting.

If you have any other health concerns please contact your GP.

## **Discharge**

Following your operation the doctor will tell you of their findings. Your discharge summary is provided to you and your GP.

Most women do not have any problems following management of a Bartholin's cyst or labial abscess.

If you have any concerns regarding your post operative recovery, please contact the **Gynaecology Ward/Womens Health Assessment Unit on 04 8060740 (24 hour coverage).**

