

CYST OR ABSCESS AT THE VAGINAL OPENING (BARTHOLIN CYST OR ABSCESS)

DEFINITION

Bartholin's glands are two small glands that sit in the small labia - the fleshy lips on either side of the vaginal opening. Normally, the glands can neither be seen nor felt. They make a small amount of a smooth secretion, which runs out through a small opening. The secretion lubricates the vaginal entrance, especially during sexual activity. If the opening is stopped up, the secretion accumulates in the gland, eventually forming a larger or smaller bulge in the labia. Such a bulge is called a Bartholin's cyst.

If there is inflammation in a Bartholin's gland, an abscess forms: then it is called a Bartholin abscess. It can be very painful and you can get a fever. A clogged Bartholin's gland can therefore be particularly annoying during sex, sports and cycling.

The cause of a cyst or inflammation of the Bartholin's gland cannot be explained and you can do nothing to prevent it from occurring.

TREATMENT

There are two methods: catheter insertion and surgery. The size of the abscess, your symptoms and your age each have a bearing on the choice of method. The doctor, in consultation with you, will assess which method will be best for you. If it is a small cyst that does not bother you, the doctor will just keep an eye on whether it is growing.

CATHETER INSERTION

We inject a local anaesthetic into the skin over the cyst / abscess. When the anaesthesia is working –which only takes a few minutes - we make a small incision in the surface and through that we put a small silicone catheter, with an

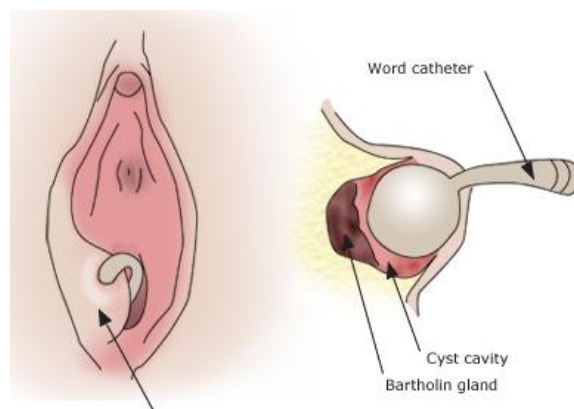
inflatable balloon on the end, into the cyst / abscess. In this way, the secretion or inflammation can run out while the catheter keeps the gland open.

It may tighten a little just as the catheter is inserted, but after a few hours you can no longer feel it.

AFTER THE CATHETER INSERTION

During the first few days, fluid may leak out. You can use a panty liner, and rinse with a hand shower after toilet visits to keep the wound clean. The catheter should preferably remain in place for approximately 3-4 weeks. If it falls out earlier, please contact us. During this period you must not use tampons, or have intercourse, but otherwise you can follow your usual routines.

For mild pain, we recommend that you take 2 tablets of Paracetamol (Panodil, Pinex, Pamol) of 500 mg 4 times daily. You can buy the tablets over the counter at the pharmacy.



CONTROL

You will be given a time for the catheter to be checked and removed, after 2 weeks. Here we will check to see if everything is how its

supposed to be, and we will also remove ½ the fluid in the balloon. After 4 weeks you'll come back to have the catheter removed unless it has fallen out itself between the 2nd and the 4th week. Often the catheter falls out by itself before this time, which won't have any negative affect on the treatment.

OPERATION INSTEAD OF CATHE- TERS

The operation takes place under local anaesthetic, and here we remove some of the cyst / abscess in the gland. The surgical opening is then stitched around the edge to provide form a new opening from the gland. The thread dissolves itself within two to three weeks.

The operation lasts 20 minutes and you can come home as early as 1 hour after the operation.

PAIN POST-OPERATION

There is usually only mild pain / tenderness. We recommend that you take 2 tablets of Paracetamol (Panodil, Pinex, Pamol) of 500 mg 4 times daily. You can buy this over the counter at the pharmacy.

We recommend that you purchase pain medication before surgery.

FOLLOWING THE OPERATION

The first few days the wound may be a little sore and some fluid may leak from it. You can use a panty liner and rinse with a hand shower after toilet visits, to keep the wound clean.

CONTROLE AND RESULTS

We recommend that you come for a check-up with us one week after the operation.

There is only a small risk that you will get a cyst or abscess in the gland again. Should that happen, we will treat it in the same way again.

WHO CAN I CALL WITH QUESTIONS?

You are welcome to call Kvindeklínikken during telephone hours on 36 46 71 40.

Revised September 2022. To be revised on an ongoing basis and certainly no later than September 2025, before in case of any significant changes.