

Pilonidal Cyst

Cysts on the buttocks can be very painful, making it extremely difficult for you to sit or walk. One cyst that is particularly common and which can get infected very easily is the pilonidal cyst.

Dr. Howard Kaufman, Dr. Gabriel Akopian and Dr. Julianne Golan are board-certified and highly-experienced colorectal doctors at Huntington Colorectal Surgeons. They have extensive experience treating pilonidal cysts in men and women of all ages. Their customized medical care will get rid of the cysts and prevent re-infection.

Contact our Pasadena medical practitioners to seek diagnosis and treatment.

How are pilonidal cysts formed?

Pilonidal cysts are located in the skin and they contain ingrown hair, dirt, and pus. They are most often located near the tailbone, above the cleft of the buttocks. Like other types of cysts, pilonidal cysts are formed when the skin's hair pierces the skin and gets embedded inside. Pilonidal cysts resemble a pimple in appearance.

Who is most susceptible to pilonidal cysts?

Pilonidal cysts are very common in people who experience a lot of skin friction near the buttock region. Typically, people who have desk jobs or remain seated for large portions of the day, are more vulnerable to pilonidal cysts.

You will also be very susceptible to these cysts if you experience excessive sweating, are obese, have an excessive amount of coarse hair in the lower back, or have experienced trauma to the skin near the tailbone region.

Signs of infected pilonidal cysts

When the pilonidal cyst is first formed, it isn't infected. However, constant friction from clothes, sweat, and pollution can infect the cyst, leading to the formation of an abscess. You'll know that the cyst is infected and is turning into an abscess if you notice the following symptoms:

- Redness in the area around the cyst.
- Swelling at the base of the spine.
- A foul-smelling pus-like discharge from the cyst.
- Bleeding from the cyst.
- Tenderness in the cyst.
- Visible abscess in the place of the cyst.
- Sudden fever of more than 100.4 °F.

A pilonidal abscess is very painful. If the abscess isn't treated, the infection can spread to other parts of your buttocks and even your anorectal region. Additionally, an untreated

pilonidal cyst or abscess can make you very vulnerable to squamous cell carcinoma, a type of skin cancer.

Our team of highly-trained colorectal surgeons can successfully treat the abscess, drain the infection, and close-up the wound.

Treating pilonidal cysts

As the first course of treatments, our experts put you on antibiotics to clear-up the infection and reduce the cyst's size. If this doesn't work, we can surgically drain the infected cyst and sterilize the wound. Next, we cauterize the cyst so it shrivels up and falls off. We do this procedure using laparoscopic or robotic surgery to avoid large incisions.

To prevent the pilonidal cysts from recurring, sometimes we perform an advanced surgical technique called Marsupialization, by cutting a slit into the cyst and suturing the edges of the slit to form an open pouch-like tissue. This ensures easier drainage of any pus, debris, or hair that collects here and reduces cyst formation chances.

The recovery period for cyst drainage is about 2 weeks, while it takes about 4 weeks for Marsupialization. It's important that you:

- Keep the treated area clean and dry.
- Prevent excessive movement & friction of the treated area.
- Reduce your exercise to reduce sweating.
- Wear loose clothes.
- Stop sitting for prolonged periods of time.
- Avoid sexual intercourse for the duration of the recovery.
- Take the antibiotics as prescribed.
- Lose weight as advised.

Ways to prevent pilonidal cysts from returning

The best way to prevent the recurrence of pilonidal cysts is to maintain good personal hygiene. It's also necessary that you follow the care practices recommended, so the cyst isn't re-infected.

Our colorectal surgeons can address any queries you may have about the procedure and after-care. Feel free to talk to us for more information. We are based in Pasadena, California.

