

SEBACEOUS CYST

(Epidermoid Cyst; Wens)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A cyst is a closed sac beneath the skin. A sebaceous cyst is filled with a soft substance made up of oil and dead cells. The cysts usually involve the skin of the trunk, face, neck, and scalp. They can affect all ages, but are most common in teens and adults. They may occur with acne.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A cyst with the following features:

- The cyst has sloped sides or is dome-shaped, is firm, and has a smooth surface. It normally does not hurt.
- The cyst is whitish or skin-colored.
- If the cyst becomes injured or infected, it may become bright red and painful.

CAUSES

Sebaceous cysts are caused by clogged hair follicles. They may enlarge from hormone changes or injury.

RISK INCREASES WITH

No specific risk factors.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Cannot be prevented at present.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Most cysts do not cause symptoms and do not require any medical treatment. Some may disappear on their own.
- Sometimes cysts can be irritated by clothes rubbing against them or by shaving. Cysts that are causing problems, are infected, or are injured can be treated.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Infection of a cyst can turn into an abscess (be filled with pus).
- Cysts can recur after treatment.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will diagnose the cyst based on its appearance.
- If needed, cysts can be removed through a simple incision in the skin lying over the cyst. The sac is removed and the incision closed with stitches. If the entire cyst wall is removed, it should not recur.
- For infected cysts, an incision may be needed to drain the pus.

MEDICATIONS

- Drugs are usually not necessary for this disorder.
- If a cyst becomes infected, antibiotics may be prescribed.
- For some, small infected cysts, treatment may include an injection of a steroid drug.

ACTIVITY

No limits.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has new skin growths or there is a change in any existing skin growth.
- After treatment, the treated skin becomes hot, red, and painful.
- The treated area does not appear to be healing well within one week.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page