University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust

Infected sebaceous cyst

Patient information

What is a sebaceous cyst?

Skin cysts, or sebaceous cysts, are slightly hardened, fluid-filled bumps under the skin. They often affect the head and neck area. Skin cysts are benign, or noncancerous, and they usually do not cause problems. They are common and range in size.

They do not tend to be painful or tender unless they become inflamed, damaged, or infected.

Signs and symptoms of infection

- Fever
- Pain and inflammation
- The cyst can grow in size
- It may burst and weep purulent (pus) discharge

Treatment

During your stay in the ear, nose, and throat (ENT) same day emergency care (SDEC) you will be reviewed by an advanced clinical practitioner (ACP).

If we think there is a cyst present, it may need draining. This is usually completed by an ACP or doctor. They use an injection of local anaesthetic to numb the area, before draining it in the treatment room. The area will need a dressing and we will book a follow up appointment to review the drained area.

You may need a course of oral (by mouth) antibiotics. If needed, you will be given a prescription for this. You will also be given advice on any regular medication that you take, and you should continue anticoagulant therapy unless advised otherwise.

We will aim to get you home on the same day - however you may need to be admitted for further treatment.

Advice for discharge

- If antibiotics are provided, you must complete the full course to prevent a further infection.
- Please keep the site clean and dry.
- Please avoid drinking alcohol.
- You will be advised on pain relief to take.
- It is very important that you eat as normal and drink plenty.
- Please remember that unless stated otherwise, your first contact in the community is your GP.
- If you need your cyst removed surgically, your GP will be able to refer for this.
- If you get worse and need further review, please contact the ENT team on **07386 682764** (Mon- Fri, 8am-8pm) or attend the emergency department out of hours.

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or email **uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net**.

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