

## Follow up

We will review the area after 10 days and we will consider removing the device. The Word Catheter can be left in place for up to four weeks to allow new skin to form around the passage and for the wound to heal. When the balloon is deflated and removed the gland will drain through the newly formed passage.

If the catheter is painful in the meantime, then you should make an appointment so that you can be examined and perhaps have a small amount of the water in the balloon removed.

Please inform us if the catheter falls out. If this occurs in the first five days, we will consider reinserting it. If it is more than five days, the doctor would be likely to suggest doing nothing further unless the abscess builds up again.

## References

- CookMedical Word Catheter Silicone Bartholin Gland Balloon  
[https://www.cookmedical.com/products/wh\\_word\\_webds/](https://www.cookmedical.com/products/wh_word_webds/)

## Contact details

### Gynaecology Outpatient Department

**Telephone:** 01483 571122 ext 4173

### PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm  
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: N/A

Future review date: January 2022

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PIN190108–1606



## Treatment of Bartholin's gland cyst/abscess using Word Catheter

### Gynaecology Outpatient Department



### Patient information leaflet

This leaflet explains what a Bartholin's gland cyst is, what the treatments are for it and how a Word Catheter works.

## What is a Bartholin's gland cyst?

All women have a Bartholin's gland at each side of the entrance to the vagina. This gland produces lubrication that enters the vagina through a small tube (duct) and helps keeping the vagina moist.

If something blocks the opening of a Bartholin's gland, fluid can build up and form a cyst. This usually happens in just one gland, not both at once.

An abscess can occur if the gland or cyst becomes infected. If this happens, you may experience tenderness and pain, fever, and pain or discomfort during sex.

## Will I need tests?

If you have an abscess, the doctor or nurse will send a sample of the pus to a lab for testing and you might need antibiotics

If you are older than 40, the doctor will take a small sample of tissue from the area (biopsy) to check for cancer (cancer in a Bartholin gland is rare, but it can happen).

## What are the treatment options for a Bartholin's gland cyst?

Treatment depends on your age and whether the cyst is causing symptoms. If you do not have symptoms, you might not need any treatment. Otherwise, treatments can include:

1. Occasionally **antibiotics** are used to treat a very small abscess.
2. Draining the cyst or abscess by placing **Word Catheter**
3. **Surgery** which would drain the abscess or make an opening that allows the gland to drain freely (this is called marsupialization). If you would like more information, please speak to your consultant.

## How does the Word Catheter work?

Insertion of a Word catheter (a tiny inflatable balloon) is a non-surgical procedure that can be performed as an outpatient.

Local anaesthetic is used to numb the area. A small cut is then made into the cyst or abscess, which is then drained.

A flexible tube (the Word catheter) with a small balloon at its tip, is inserted and then inflated with very small amount of water into the cyst or abscess to create a passage. Rarely a stitch may be used to help hold the balloon in place.

You will experience some discomfort from your wound. This should be relieved by painkillers such as paracetamol.

You may return to work and your normal activities as soon as you wish and feel able.

## What are the benefits of having this procedure?

You will not need to be admitted to hospital and it avoids you having a general anaesthetic. You can take up normal activities again when you are comfortable.

## What are the risks of this procedure?

- **Discomfort**; please inform us if you are in pain and we will remove some of the fluid from the balloon
- **Recurrence** (3-17%)
- **Bleeding**, in case of this happening the doctor will consider using some sutures to stop the bleeding
- **Balloon falling out**, if the balloon falls out within five days from insertion, please let us know and we will consider replacing the device with a new one
- **Infection**