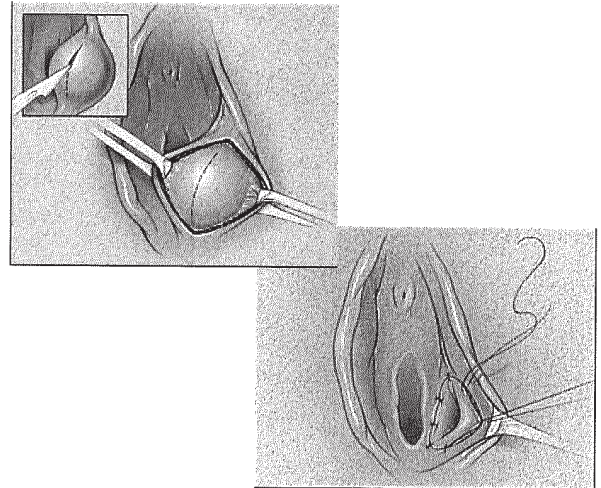
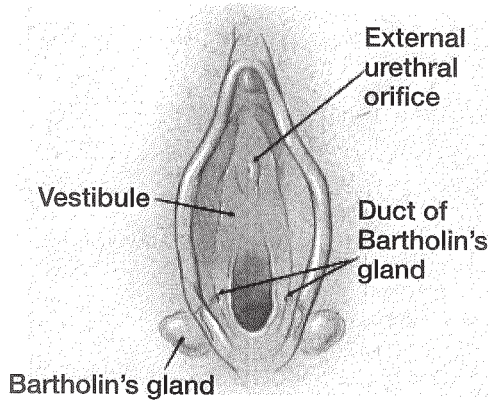




### What is a Bartholin's gland cyst?

A Bartholin's gland cyst is a small sac of fluid that forms when the opening of a Bartholin's gland is blocked. All women and girls have two Bartholin's glands just below the opening of the vagina.



### Marsupialisation of Bartholin's duct cyst. (Left)

A vertical incision is made over the center of the cyst to dissect it free of mucosa. (Right) The cyst wall is everted and approximated to the edge of the vestibular mucosa with interrupted sutures.

The Bartholin's glands make small amounts of fluid. The fluid helps keep the vulva moist. (The vulva is the area around the opening of the vagina.) 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. If this fluid then becomes infected, it is then called a Bartholin's abscess.

### What are the symptoms of a Bartholin's gland cyst?

Most women notice a lump in the vulva, but Bartholin's gland cysts often do not cause any other symptoms. If they do, the main symptoms are pain or discomfort when a woman walks, sits or has sex.

If a Bartholin's gland cyst gets infected, it can form an abscess. An abscess is an infected lump.

Symptoms of an abscess include:

- Severe pain - a woman might not be able to walk, sit or have sex
- Swelling
- Redness

### Will I need tests?

Maybe. If you have an abscess, the doctor or nurse will send a sample of the pus to a lab for testing. This can show what type of germ caused the infection. You might need antibiotics for an infection caused by certain germs. If you are older than 50, the doctor or nurse will do a test called a 'biopsy' to check for cancer. (Cancer in a Bartholin's gland is rare, but it can happen.) In this test, the doctor takes a small sample of tissue from the area, then sends the tissue to a laboratory for it to be tested under a microscope for cancer.

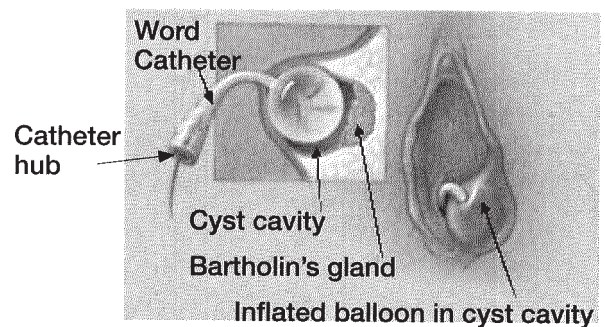
### How is a Bartholin's gland cyst treated?

Treatment depends on your age and whether the cyst is causing symptoms. If you do not have any symptoms, you may not need any treatment.

Otherwise treatments include:

- Antibiotics - doctors give these medicines if an abscess is caused by certain types of infection. These are not always required.
- Draining the cyst or abscess - this is called placing a Word Catheter. In this procedure, the doctor cuts a small hole to let fluid or pus out, then they will put a tiny balloon in the hole to keep it from closing completely. The balloon is connected to a tiny tube called catheter that helps fluid drain from the antibiotics - doctors give these medicines if an abscess is caused by certain types of gland. This procedure is normally done in ED or Women's Health Clinic. But, if you have a large or deep abscess, you might need treatment in the operating theatre.

### Placement of Word Catheter in a Bartholin gland cyst cavity after drainage





### Removal of Word Catheter

A nurse or GP can take the balloon out after about one month, by removing 2 - 3ml via the catheter hub with a needle or syringe. It will leave a small opening where fluid can drain.

- Surgery - doctors can do this if draining fluid and putting in a balloon does not work well. Under a general anaesthetic a doctor can make a new opening to help the Bartholin's gland, drain the fluid and use sutures to keep the abscess open so all the pus can drain. This is called Marsupialisation. Otherwise the doctor can remove the entire Bartholin's gland and any abscess or cyst. But surgery has a higher risk of side effects than other treatment, so doctors don't do it as often.

### Post treatment care

- You should wear a sanitary pad to absorb discharge. Not tampons until the area has healed. There may be some bleeding or discharge from the surgical area. This should only last for about one week.
- Keep the area as clean and dry as possible. This can be achieved by washing the area with warm water every time you pass urine. Avoid using soaps and body washes. The area should be patted dry after each washing or use a hair dryer on a cool setting.
- Avoid spas, baths and swimming pools for six to eight weeks.
- You should maintain pelvic rest.
- If you are prescribed antibiotics by the doctor, you must complete the course.
- The Word Catheter is left in place for at least four weeks to promote formation of a tract so any fluid can continue to drain.
- If you experience persistent discomfort despite analgesics seek medical advice. You should call to be examined if you are experiencing increasing swelling, pain vaginal discharge/bleeding, or fever.

### Followup

- Please make an appointment to see your GP in four weeks to check the area has healed and to remove the Word Catheter if still present

Date of insertion:

Date of followup:

- If recurrent cysts occur, then Marsupialisation or excision can be performed, usually in an operating room or ambulatory surgical facility.
- If you have any problems or questions please call the team at ASC Gynaecology.

