



Bartholin Cyst or Abscess

Bartholin glands are small glands that are deep in the labia majora near the opening of the vagina. The gland is usually very small and cannot be palpated (felt). A duct (canal) drains mucus from the gland to the outside vulva.

When this duct becomes blocked, the mucus can be trapped in the duct or gland causing a cyst to form. The cyst can become infected and form an abscess (infected cyst). The symptoms of a cyst are swelling and mild pressure in the labia majora. An abscess is usually very painful, red and swollen.

Cysts can be left untreated if they are not causing any symptoms. An abscess usually requires drainage and antibiotics. An abscess is usually drained in the office. A small catheter can be placed into the abscess after it is opened to allow a new channel to form and prevent backup of mucus or fluid. Recurrent cysts may require surgery. Once the infection has cleared, the cyst can be marsupialized (opened) or removed.