

## **PILAR CYST**

A pilar cyst is a type of skin growth. Most people notice the cyst as a small lump or bump below the surface of the skin. A cyst is a small sac lined by cells that produce a white cheesy material called keratin. It is helpful to think of the cyst as a small pea or small grape below the surface of the skin.

Pilar cysts are benign growths which are fairly common. Pilar cysts can run in families. Pilar cysts can occur in patients of any age. Pilar cysts are felt to be a type of cyst from hair follicles. That is why they are most commonly found on the scalp.

These growths are smooth, dome shaped swellings in the skin that feel firm. They are seen most often on the scalp but can occur in other body parts as well. Usually the hair overlying the cyst is normal.

Occasionally pilar cysts become inflamed because they are exposed to trauma from combing or brushing the hair. Occasionally cysts can become inflamed and drain spontaneously. If you have any symptoms in the area please let me know.

Many patients have more than one pilar cyst on their scalp. This is often the case in the type of pilar cysts that are inherited in families.

Since these growths are benign and usually do not produce any symptoms, treatment is not necessary. Most people leave their pilar cysts alone. If an individual lesion becomes more protruding or has been inflamed, then surgical excision can be arranged.

Pilar cysts normally are removed by excising the entire cyst sac. This often requires one or two stitches. Occasionally they can be opened up and drained.

As I noted above, a pilar cyst is a benign growth. Unless there are specific problems with the area, they are often left alone. If you have any other questions regarding these growths, please ask me before you leave the office.