

Cyst Removal

What Is a Skin Cyst?

A skin cyst is a **closed sac under the skin** that can fill with **keratin (skin protein)** or fluid. The most common types we remove are:

- **Epidermoid (epidermal inclusion) cysts** – common on face, neck, trunk, and genitals
- **Pilar (trichilemmal) cysts** – common on the scalp
- **Steatocystoma** (less common)

Cysts are usually **benign (non-cancerous)**. They can stay the same size, slowly enlarge, or become inflamed.



Why Do People Choose Cyst Removal?

Cyst removal may be recommended or requested when a cyst:

- Repeatedly becomes **inflamed** or **infected**
- Is painful or tender
- Is enlarging or bothersome
- Ruptures and causes recurrent swelling
- Interferes with shaving, hair care, clothing, or daily activities
- Is cosmetically concerning
- Needs diagnosis (if the growth is uncertain)

What Does Cyst Removal Involve?

Cyst removal is typically an **in-office procedure** done with **local numbing medicine**.

In general:

1. We clean the skin and numb the area
2. A small incision is made
3. The cyst sac is carefully removed (this helps prevent recurrence)
4. The skin is closed with stitches when needed
5. A bandage is applied

Important: “Draining” a cyst can relieve pressure, but it may come back unless the cyst sac is removed.

Typical Images (Use These in Elementor)

3-card image row (recommended):

1. **Epidermoid cyst bump**
ALT: “Epidermoid cyst presenting as a smooth, round bump under the skin.”
 2. **Pilar cyst on scalp**
ALT: “Pilar cyst on the scalp—firm, smooth lump beneath the skin.”
 3. **In-office cyst excision setup**
ALT: “Dermatologist performing cyst removal with a small incision and sutures.”
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Pre-Op Instructions (Before Cyst Removal)

1–2 weeks before

- Tell us if you take:
 - **Blood thinners** (warfarin, Eliquis, Xarelto, Plavix, etc.)
 - **Aspirin or NSAIDs** (ibuprofen, naproxen)
⚠ Do not stop prescription blood thinners unless your prescribing clinician instructs you.
- Let us know if you have:
 - A bleeding disorder
 - A pacemaker/implanted device (rarely relevant but important for some procedures)
 - Allergies to adhesives, antiseptics, or numbing medications
 - History of keloids or poor wound healing

1 week before

- Stop drinking **alcohol** (due to blood thinning effect of alcohol)
- Stop smoking
- stop fish oil supplement
- avoid optional aspirin and NSAIDS: **Ibuprofen** (Advil®, Motrin®), **Naproxen** (Aleve®), **Aspirin** (Bayer®), etc...

If your cyst is inflamed or infected

- Some cysts are best removed **after inflammation calms down**.
If it's red, painful, hot, or draining, we may treat the inflammation first and schedule removal later.

Day of procedure

- Eat normally (no fasting needed)
 - Shower and arrive with clean skin
 - Wear loose clothing that won't rub the bandage
 - Avoid applying lotions/oils directly over the area
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Post-Op Instructions (After Cyst Removal)

What's normal

- Mild soreness or tightness
- Minor bleeding on the bandage
- Bruising around the area
- Itching as the wound heals

Wound care (general)

Follow your specific written instructions, but typically:

- Keep the bandage on and dry for the first **24 hours**
- After 24 hours:
 1. Clean gently with soap and water
 2. Pat dry
 3. Apply a thin layer of ointment if instructed
 4. Cover with a clean bandage
- Avoid soaking (pools/hot tubs/baths) until cleared
- Limit stretching or heavy exercise that pulls on stitches (especially on back, shoulders, groin)

Stitches

- Some stitches dissolve; others need removal in clinic
- We will tell you when to return (timing depends on location)

Call the office if you have

- Increasing redness, warmth, swelling, or worsening pain
 - Pus-like drainage or foul odor
 - Fever or chills
 - Bleeding that doesn't stop after **10–15 minutes of firm pressure**
 - The incision opens up
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Scar Care (After the Skin Has Fully Closed)

Once healed:

- Protect from sun (sun can darken scars)
 - Consider silicone gel/sheets if recommended
 - Avoid picking at scabs during healing (reduces scarring)
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Cyst Removal FAQ

Will the cyst come back after removal?

If the entire cyst sac is removed, recurrence is less likely. If only drained, cysts often return.

Does cyst removal hurt?

You may feel a quick pinch/burn with the numbing medicine. After that, most people feel pressure but not sharp pain.

Will I have a scar?

Yes. Any incision can leave a scar. We place incisions carefully and provide wound-care instructions to help the scar heal as nicely as possible.

Do you send the cyst to the lab?

Often, yes—especially if the diagnosis is uncertain or your clinician recommends confirmation.

Can you remove an inflamed cyst the same day?

Sometimes, but removal is often easier and safer once inflammation settles. In some cases we treat first and schedule removal later.

What if my cyst is infected?

If it's infected, you may need treatment first (and sometimes drainage). Definitive removal is usually scheduled after the infection improves.

How long does the procedure take?

Many cyst removals take **20–45 minutes**, depending on size and location.

When can I shower or exercise again?

You can usually shower after 24 hours (unless instructed otherwise), but heavy exercise may need to wait—especially if stitches could pull. We'll give you guidance based on the location.