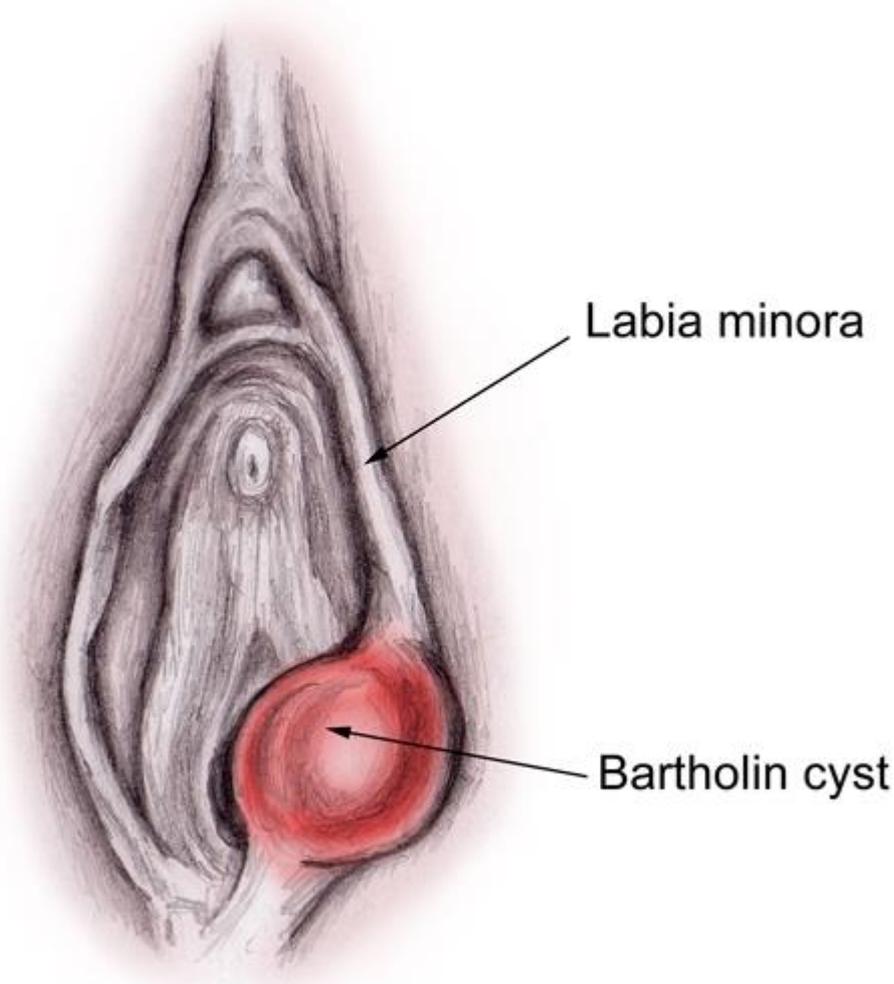


### Treating a Bartholin's cyst or abscess with a Word catheter

This leaflet will provide the information you need to understand what a Bartholin's cyst/abscess is and how it can be treated with a Word catheter in the Magnolia Therapy Centre under local anaesthesia (an injection to numb the skin overlying the cyst before it is drained).

#### What is a Bartholin's cyst/abscess?



The Bartholin's glands lie near the entrance to the front passage or vagina and produce a fluid that lubricates the vagina during sex. The gland has narrow tube (duct) which opens into the vagina. When the tube or duct becomes blocked a cyst forms (painless swelling). If the cyst is infected, then it forms an abscess and causes pain and swelling. You may also have difficulty in walking and sitting. Sex may be uncomfortable for you while the swelling is there.

**What causes a Bartholin's cyst/abscess and how common are they?** Exactly why the duct of the Bartholin's gland becomes blocked and forms a cyst is unknown. It can occur in any age group, and it affects one in every 50 women. That means out of 50 women one will have the cyst, the other 49 will be unaffected.

In a few cases, the cyst becomes infected to form a Bartholin's abscess by bacteria found in the vagina or by a sexually transmitted infection, such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea.

If it is an abscess, then the doctor will take a swab of the pus (infected fluid) drained from the abscess to make sure that you are given the right antibiotic to cure the infection.

**What happens if I do not get treatment?** A cyst may heal by itself and no treatment is needed. But if you have an abscess, it may continue to cause pain and could burst without treatment. You may continue to suffer and the problem often comes back. If you decide to have the cyst/abscess drained, this will be done after making sure you understand what the procedure involves, risks and benefits. Dr Byrne will ask for your written informed consent by asking you to sign the consent form for drainage of cyst using a Word balloon catheter.

#### **What happens during 'Word' balloon catheter insertion?**

This procedure is safe and simple outpatient procedure. The treatment involves making a passage/channel from the cyst or abscess through which the gland can drain. The whole procedure takes around 20 minutes. The area is cleaned and a local anaesthetic is given. A small cut is made in the area of the abscess and a thin flexible tube (catheter) with a small balloon at its tip is inserted to create a passage. The balloon is then inflated with a liquid (saline, weak salt solution) to keep the catheter in place for 3 weeks, allowing the cyst to drain.

#### **What are the risks associated with a 'Word' balloon catheter insertion?**

There are risks associated with any procedure. Dr Byrne will explain these risks to you before you sign a consent form. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions before the procedure. The most common risks or complications from this procedure include: an infection (risk is low, as it is done with sterile single-use instruments), but cannot be certain it will not occur due to normal bacteria living in the vagina. All steps to reduce this risk from happening will be taken

- **Bleeding** – risk of this happening is low. All steps to reduce this risk from happening will be taken.
- **Incomplete drainage** – sometimes the balloon may be too full and may cause some pain. In which case the balloon will need to be slightly deflated, by removing a small amount of saline in the balloon. The catheter will still stay in place for the required length of time.

- **Recurrence (the cyst comes back)** – the risk is very low, four in 100 people experience a recurrence.

**When can I leave the clinic?** You should be able to go home around 30 minutes after the procedure. I need to check you are alright before going home. You will need someone to drive you home from the clinic and take it easy for the rest of the day. The day after you can continue as normal. If you have any concerns when you get home, please phone me on 07930 485166 and I will answer your concerns.

**What medicines will I need to take?** You will be given a private prescription for some painkillers and a course of antibiotics, which you will need to take to a pharmacy. Please make sure that you complete the entire course of antibiotics that are prescribed for you. Please, also make sure that the antibiotics I have prescribed is not one that you are allergic to.

**What can I expect after the procedure?** You may notice a small amount of discharge or bleeding for a couple of days from the site of the balloon catheter. The end of the catheter inserted into the vagina so it drains in there. Please, bring a pad with you and wear a pad whilst the catheter is in place.

Please, do not have sexual intercourse until the catheter is removed, at your check-up in 3 weeks and the area has healed..

#### **When will the catheter be removed?**

The catheter is left in place for three weeks to allow new skin to form around the passage and for the wound to heal. You will then need to return to the clinic for a follow-up appointment 3 weeks after the drainage, to have the balloon deflated by taking out the saline and removed. The gland will continue to drain through the newly formed passage.

If there is anything that I have not mentioned in this leaflet, please feel free to ask.

Dr Shamim Byrne FRCOG tel:07930485166