



CYSTS

Cysts are common, closed sac structures that can occur almost anywhere on the body in persons of any age. Three types of common cysts found in the skin include:

- Epidermal (sebaceous or keratinous) cyst
- Trichilemmal (pilar) cyst (wen)
- Milium (milia cyst)

An epidermal cyst is a freely movable nodule most commonly located on the face, ears, neck, back, and scalp. The inside of the cyst contains keratin, a major component of skin. Epidermal cysts may occur when the hair follicle is clogged, as in severe acne.

Trichilemmal cysts (wens) often appear to be very similar to epidermal cysts. These cysts, however, mainly occur in multiple locations on the scalp.

Milia are small, firm whitish lesions usually found around the eyes and are very common on the faces of newborns and infants. Although adults may want the milia removed for cosmetic reasons, the lesions are generally not treated in infants, because they will resolve on their own within a few weeks to months.

Unless a cyst ruptures or becomes inflamed or infected, it usually does not cause pain. Some cysts disappear on their own without treatment, and others cysts may need to be drained or injected with corticosteroids to cause shrinkage.

When a cyst is being removed, it is important that the entire cyst wall is either removed or sufficiently destroyed to prevent recurrence. A biopsy sometimes is taken from the cyst wall (capsule) to rule out malignancy.

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