

CYSTS OF THE SKIN

“EPIDERMAL CYSTS”

What is an Epidermal Cyst?

An Epidermal Cyst is a harmless, movable, firm, ball-like growth in the skin. The most common locations are the face, neck, upper chest, and back. Some people get many of them. The cyst is filled with a “cheesy”, often smelly material that sometimes oozes out onto the skin’s surface. We don’t know why cysts occur.

Are cysts a form of cancer?

No, they are not and do not become cancerous.

Can cysts cause problems?

Occasionally germs can get into the cyst and cause an infection. If this happens, antibiotics taken orally and minor surgery performed in the office is often needed.

Should I have the cyst removed?

Very small cysts need not be removed unless you do not like their cosmetic appearance. Larger cysts are often removed because of the danger of infection and to improve one’s appearance.

How is the cyst removed?

A local anesthetic is used to numb the skin. A small surgical cut is made into the skin overlying the cyst and the cyst is then removed. The skin opening is closed with stitches which are usually removed one to two weeks later. This small operation is done in the office.

Do cysts return after being removed?

Surgery usually cures cysts, but sometimes a cyst comes back and requires a second treatment.