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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

Name: Katharine Backhouse  
Role: Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist  
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# Insertion of Word catheter for Bartholin's abscess

## What is the Word catheter?

The Word catheter allows fluid within an abscess or cyst to drain continuously. The cavity will then heal from the base upwards. This helps to reduce the chance of the abscess or cyst coming back again. To stop the catheter falling out a balloon at one end is filled with approximately 2-3mls of water during the procedure.

## What can I expect after the procedure?

You will feel a little sore once the local anaesthetic has worn off, but it should be much better than before the abscess or cyst was drained. If you need any pain relief you should take your normal pain killers.

The catheter is likely to stay in place for 4-6 weeks, until the abscess or cyst has healed. Occasionally the catheter falls out before then. If this happens please contact us on the details below and we will arrange for you to be seen again.

Normally we will arrange to see you 4-5 weeks after the catheter has been inserted. Assuming the abscess site is well healed, then the catheter will be very gently removed.

## Frequently asked questions

**Q.** Can I bath and shower as normal?

**A.** Yes, you may wash as normal.

**Q.** What happens to the fluid that drains from the catheter?

**A.** Most of the fluid will have been drained at the time of the procedure.

There should be very little in the way of discharge after that although you may like to use a pad. Once the catheter is in, the fluid should not be offensive

**Q.** Can I use tampons?

**A.** Yes, use tampons as normal. Just be careful when removing them that the string doesn't get caught around the catheter.

**Q.** Can I have sex with the catheter in?

**A.** Initially it will probably be too sore, but once it is comfortable you may have sex. This will usually be after a few days.

## Contact details

If you would like any advice, please call as 01722 336262 ext 4431 and we will ask a doctor to call you back. If no one is available to answer then please leave a message on the answerphone with your telephone number and we will call you back as soon as possible.