Pilonidal Sinus

What is a pilonidal sinus?

A pilonidal sinus:

- Is an abnormal cavity or collection of hairs under the skin that usually occurs over the tailbone.
- Looks like a small pit or dimple on the surface of the skin.
- May be caused by ingrown hairs, or from pressure or friction on the skin.

Is a pilonidal sinus harmful?

A pilonidal sinus is not harmful. However, germs can build up among the hairs and cause an infection. Signs of an infection are pain, swelling and redness of the surrounding skin. An abscess or pocket of pus can develop. Pus or blood may drain from the abscess.

When does a pilonidal sinus need treatment?

- If you have a pilonidal sinus with no signs of infection, just keep the area clean and dry. No treatment is needed.
  - Your doctor may recommend laser hair removal in the affected area. Ontario Health Insurance (OHIP) does not pay for this, but it may be covered if you have private medical insurance.
- If there is an infection, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to treat it.
- If there is an abscess, your doctor may recommend a surgical procedure to drain it.
- If the sinus keeps becoming infected, your doctor may recommend a surgical procedure to take out the sinus and ingrown hairs.
- A pilonidal sinus may come back, even after treatment.