



What are Cysts? Cysts are one of the most common benign tumors of the skin. They present as a round, rubbery, mobile mass that stretches out the overlying skin and is connected to the surface of the skin by a pore or “punctum”. They can be found anywhere on the body.

What is the cause? Cysts frequently result from a plugging of the pore. A sac of skin forms and gets larger as it becomes filled with keratin, a component of your skin cells. This is a pasty, whitish material that sometimes can be expressed from the cyst and tends to have a foul odor.

Are they harmful? No, they are benign and do not develop into cancers. They may grow slowly over time and then reach a stable size. Once in awhile, they may rupture and become inflamed which results in redness, swelling and pain in the area. Sometimes pus will drain. To avoid inflammation or infection of a cyst, it is best not to squeeze it.

Does a Cyst need to be removed? The majority of cysts cause no problems and therefore do not need to be removed. On occasion, a cyst may become objectionably large, interfere with function, get inflamed or are symptomatic. In these cases, removal is achieved by local surgical excision. Small, asymptomatic cysts may be removed electively by contacting the Cosmetic Services Center (408) 851-8200 to arrange elective removal for a fee.

Will I develop more? You may develop more cysts over time and there is no way to prevent this from happening. You may also only ever have one cyst in your lifetime.