

# Smegmal Cyst

A **smegmal cyst** is a collection of smegma that is found behind a foreskin that doesn't retract. They are sometimes called *preputial pearls*.

They are a normal part of development of the foreskin.

## Why do they occur?

At birth the foreskin and glans (tip of the penis) are stuck together. During the course of childhood the foreskin and the glans separate from each other.

This separation occurs in spots over the glans, as opposed to from the top down.

Smegma is made up of the normal secretions of the skin and skin that has shed. This is normal. Because the 'islands' where the glans and the foreskin have separated cannot communicate with the 'outside world' this smegma gets trapped. As it builds up it becomes visible as a swelling. This is a smegmal cyst.

## What symptoms do they cause?

Smegmal cysts do not cause any symptoms. They are not sore and do not cause any problems with peeing.

They cause a white firm swelling on the penis (see photo). The swelling can be in any position on the penis. The swelling is not tender.



Typical appearance of a smegmal cyst.

## How do you treat a smegmal cyst?

Smegmal cysts do not require any treatment.

With time the foreskin of a young boy will separate from the glans and become retractile. Once the glans and the foreskin separate the cyst will disappear by itself.

## Do they cause any long term problems?

No. Smegmal cysts do not cause any long term problems. They are a normal part of growth and development for many boys.