



How to Get Rid of Boils


Have a pesky boil that isn't going away? Need to go out on a date next week and don't want to have the blemish on your face? Getting rid of boils isn't difficult to do, and you should see satisfactory results within a few days. In most cases you can remove that pesky boil, in whatever form it is, using your household medical supplies. For larger boils, you'll probably need to see a doctor to make sure it doesn't get infected.

Steps

- 1 Understand the different kinds of boils.** A boil, or abscess, is a collection of pus that forms under the skin, although not all boils are made the same. Boils exist in four main forms.
 - A **furuncle** or **carbuncle**. A furuncle is primarily caused by the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*, and refers to a boil that occurs inside a hair follicle.^[1] A carbuncle is usually bigger than a furuncle because it involves multiple hair follicles. Carbuncles may feel hard inside the skin.
 - An **acne cyst**. Cystic acne occurs when the oil ducts underneath the skin get clogged and infected, resulting in abscesses that are much bigger than common acne.^[1]
 - A **hidradenitis suppurativa**. This condition involves multiple abscesses forming in the armpit or groin area, caused by infected sweat glands. Typically not treatable by antibiotics alone, hidradenitis suppurativa often requires surgery.^[1]
 - A **pilonidal cyst**. This boil forms in the crease of buttocks, often after prolonged sitting. A hair follicle becomes infected and inflamed, soon resulting in a tender, firm boil.
- 2 If you're unsure of the medical reason behind your boil or lesion, consult a doctor.** If you're not totally sure that what you're dealing with is a boil, make an appointment to see your doctor. Self-diagnosing a cold can be dangerous; self-diagnosing a more serious medical condition can have adverse consequences.
- 3 Use heat to treat the boil.** Applying heat to the boil will increase the circulation of blood and help activate the body's immune response, bringing antibodies and white blood cells to the infection.^[1]
 - Use a hot pack. Purchase a hot pack that is microwavable or relies on a chemical reaction. Alternately, use a hot water bottle to apply heat to boil for intervals of 10 to 20 minutes every couple of hours.
 - Use a hot, moist compress (hot soak) to apply heat to the boil. Hot soaks are effective because they promote efficient drainage of the infected tissue if needed, as well as help send oxygen, nutrients, and white blood cells over to the infection.^[2]
- 4 Do not drain, lance, or pop the boil if it is still small and firm.** Most boils will drain on their own with the help of hot soaks. Draining and popping boils can lead to prolonged infection, inflammation, and scarring.
- 5 Only pop the boil if it becomes soft and develops a visible pustule (optional).**^[1] Again, most boils can be drained without popping, as popping is disruptive to the skin and inflammatory. Sometimes, however, popping is necessary when the boil has "formed a head," meaning that the pus at the top of the boil is visible.^[1]
- 6 For larger boils, consult a doctor.** Often, larger boils contain multiple small pockets of pus that will need to be lanced by a licensed medical professional.
 - Your doctor will also be able to prescribe a course of oral antibiotics to be taken in combination with lancing. Antibiotics will treat the underlying infection, although antibiotics alone often do not completely treat boils.


Community Q&A

Are there other ways to bust a boil without hot water?

 Yes. You can put a poultice on it. The most common poultice consists of bread and warm milk.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 4 Helpful 17

How can I permanently be free from boils?

 It is very difficult to be permanently free from boils, but it is possible to slow them down/reduce them. Avoid eating junk foods, sweets, and sodas, and consider asking your doctor for a prescribed medication.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 29 Helpful 70

How do I deal with a boil in my groin area?

 Apply a hot towel for about 15 minutes. If you have Epsom salt on hand, taking a warm bath with this in the water will also help bring the boil to a head.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 2 Helpful 11

What can I do for a boil in the nose?

 You will need to visit your doctor. Boils around the face and nose are more serious. In the meantime, apply a hot compress to your nose for 10 minutes, 3 times a day. Avoid touching it.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 19 Helpful 48

Where can I go to get a severe case of boils examined?

 If it is severe, and you cannot get in to see your primary care doctor, then it is best to go to an Urgent Care or the emergency room.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 17 Helpful 35

What if the boil doesn't have a head, so you cannot pop it?

 If it does not have a head, it is not ready to pop. Applying a heat pack will help bring the pus to the surface and form a head. Do not squeeze or touch the boil, because it will just make it worse. Let it drain on its own.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 5 Helpful 14

When should you go to the ER for boils?

 As soon as it starts to be a size of a golf ball. If you go to the hospital while it's small, then the doctor wont be able to drain it.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 38 Helpful 54

At what point should I seek medical attention?

 As soon as you feel the skin around it start to become firm and hard. Do not pop it, touch it, pick it or do anything to it before you have seen your doctor. Boils can become very serious, so as soon as you think you may be getting a boil, be sure to see your doctor straight away.


Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 32 Helpful 38

My boil has drained, but is the size of a tennis ball and the skin is gone. What can I do?

 You need to see a doctor so that she can pack the wound and dress it for you.

Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 6 Helpful 10

I have boils erupting on my skin very often. What should I do?

 Consult a doctor immediately. In the meantime, try to keep the area very clean to avoid it from spreading. Change and wash bed sheets about every two weeks.

Flag as duplicate Not Helpful 2 Helpful 5

Tips

- Try not to pick at your boil. Picking at it will cause irritation and possibly even inflammation.
- Before touching your boil, you should wash your hands and use a hot towel on your boil. Whatever you do, don't try to pop it, it will only make things worse!

Warnings

- Never lance a boil on your own. Have a professional doctor do it for you, even if its inconvenient.

Sources and Citations

1. [↑] ^{1.01.11.21.31.41.5}<http://www.medicinenet.com/boils/article.htm>
2. <http://rienstraclinic.com/health-info/illnesses/infection/hot-soak/>