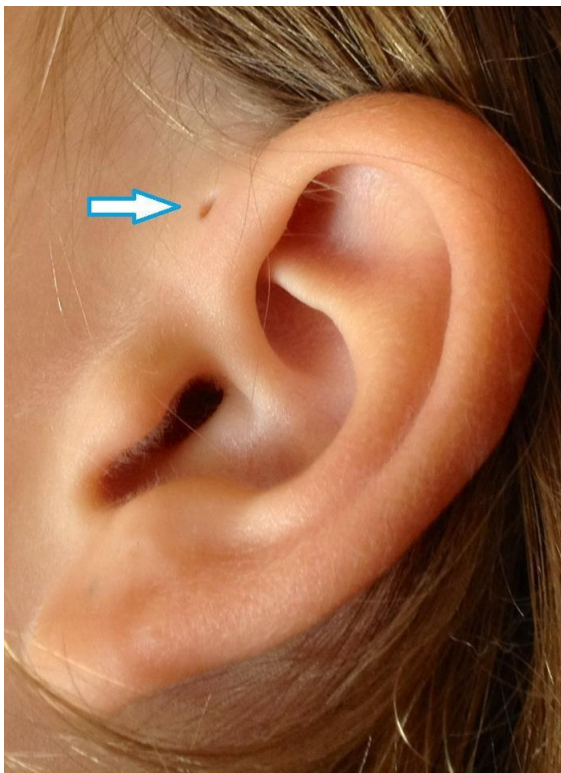


## Preauricular sinuses

Preauricular sinuses are common congenital, meaning children are born with this malformation. However, the malformation is not associated with hearing impairments, and only rarely associated with a genetic syndrome involving other problems. A preauricular sinus can affect one or both ears and appears as a small pit just in front of the external ear. (Photograph)



Preauricular sinus has tracts with extensive branching running underneath the skin. Most people with preauricular sinuses are completely asymptomatic.

The main problem with preauricular pits, if they appear in an otherwise healthy child, is that they can lead to benign cysts or infections, including small pus-filled masses known as abscesses. In case of repeated infections, your surgeon may recommend complete removal of the tract. Otherwise, if it poses no chronic problems, it may be left alone.

## **Management**

- If it does not become infected, no treatment is required.
- Infected sinus is treated with oral antibiotics. Needle aspiration or incision and drainage maybe required if an abscess is formed or if it fails to respond to antibiotics.
- Surgically removing the entire tract in those with recurrent infections is performed when the infection has completely settled to reduce risks of the surgery in particular risk of recurrence and poor wound healing. The procedure is performed under general anaesthesia to remove the entire tract and may take up to an hour.