

## Ganglion Cysts



## What are Ganglion Cysts?

Ganglion cysts are common lumps that are usually found in the hand and wrist. They are filled with gelatinous fluid from nearby joints or tendon sheaths. There are no specific causes for Ganglion cysts and they may be painful. They often change in size and may disappear completely. Ganglion cysts are unlikely to be malignant (cancerous).

## How is it diagnosed?

The diagnosis is based on where the cyst is and what it feels like. The surgeon may recommend X-rays to determine if there are problems in nearby joints if needed.

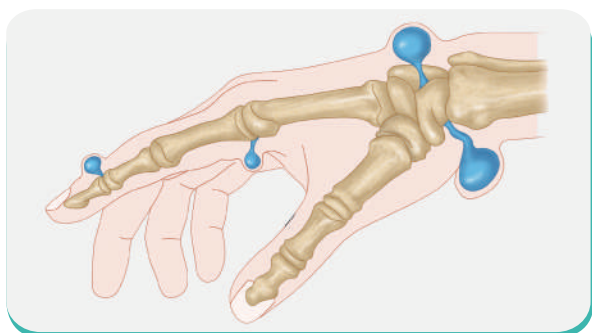
## How is it treated?

### Observation:

Ganglion cysts must be observed for any changes. If the cyst causes persistent pain to the patient, other treatment may be recommended.

### Aspiration:

In some cases, it is possible to suck out (aspirate) the fluid with a needle and syringe. There is a high chance that the cyst will recur, as the wall of the cyst is not removed, and the fluid may form again to refill the ganglion. However, in some patients it cures the problem. As it is quite easy for a doctor to do, this is often attempted first.





### **Surgical excision:**

#### **What happens at surgery?**

Cyst removal is usually done as a day-case procedure under general anaesthesia and after surgery the hand will be bandaged. Simple painkillers (e.g., paracetamol and ibuprofen) are frequently needed. 14 days following the surgery, the dressings will be taken off and the stitches will be removed.

#### **What are the possible complications?**

- It is possible to have a recurrence of the ganglion in 10% to 30% of the cases.
- You may notice your grip strength is reduced.
- There is a small risk of infection.
- Occasionally persistent swelling, joint stiffness and pain may occur.
- Scar tenderness is common, although this normally subsides by six weeks. Massage to the scar can be helpful to relieve these symptoms.