



Ganglion Cyst

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What are ganglion cysts?

Ganglion cysts are lumps that develop on the top or palm side of your wrist. They can also grow on your finger joints or around the tendons in your hand or wrist.

The cysts can be round or oval in shape and feel soft or firm. They're filled with a clear, gel-like fluid and may grow larger over time. In some cases, cysts disappear on their own without treatment. However, if you have a ganglion cyst that continues to grow, you may experience discomfort and limitations in movements.

You can also develop a mucous cyst, a type of ganglion cyst that forms in the finger joint by your fingernail. This type of cyst is usually firm and may interfere with the growth of a healthy fingernail. In the event a mucous cyst bursts, it can increase your risk for infection.

What causes ganglion cysts?

The specific cause of ganglion cysts isn't clear. However, they often form near an irritated joint or tendon. People of any age can develop cysts, which aren't harmful and can't spread to other areas of your body. Dr. Hung often diagnoses a ganglion cyst after a physical examination. In some cases, you may need an imaging test, such as an ultrasound or MRI, to rule out other possible conditions.

When do I need surgery for ganglion cysts?

Initially, you may need to try nonsurgical treatment options, such as over-the-counter medications, to relieve pain.

Dr. Hung monitors the cyst, and if it begins growing larger or becomes too painful, she may recommend aspirating the cyst to drain the fluid and shrink its size.

If the cyst develops again or begins to interfere with your usual activities, surgical removal of the cyst can provide long-term relief.

What happens during ganglion cyst removal?

During surgery, Dr. Hung removes the cyst and a part of the covering of your joint or tendon to prevent recurrent cyst growth. Depending on its size and location, she may use traditional open surgical techniques to eliminate the cyst.

Even with the surgical excision, you may still be at risk for the cyst coming back. Dr. Hung determines the best way to manage recurrent cysts based on your medical history and size and location of the cyst.