

Mr Stephen Milner DM FRCS (Tr & Orth)
Consultant Trauma, Orthopaedic and Foot & Ankle Surgeon
Email: steve.milner@nhs.net

Secretary: Marilyn Wayman
01332 783057 (direct dial)
Email: marilyn.wayman@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk

OS19lite Excision of a Ganglion

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This document will give you information about an excision of a ganglion. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a ganglion?

A ganglion is a lump under the skin that contains fluid.

Most ganglions form near the wrist joint (see figure 1). They are also found on the ankle and foot. The fluid in the ganglion comes from a joint or tendon through a narrow channel.

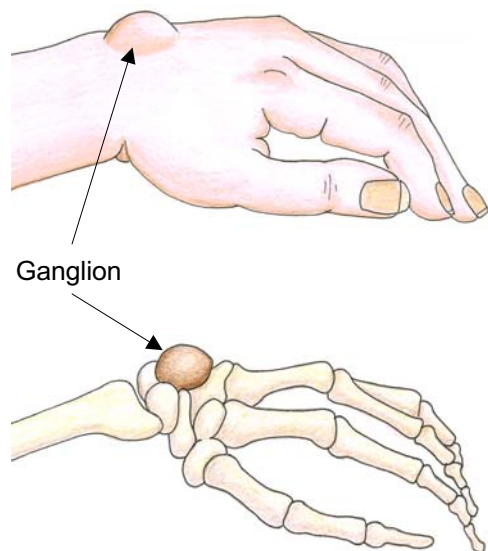


Figure 1

Typical position and appearance of a ganglion

What are the benefits of surgery?

The lump and any discomfort from it should disappear. Surgery gives the best chance of stopping the ganglion coming back.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

A ganglion will often disappear on its own after a year or two. If your ganglion is not causing much trouble, it is best to leave it alone.

The fluid can be taken out of the ganglion using a needle. This improves any discomfort for a while. Your doctor may also inject the ganglion with a steroid (cortisone). These treatments may help for a short time.

What does the operation involve?

A variety of anaesthetic techniques is possible. The operation usually takes between a quarter of an hour and half an hour.

Your surgeon will make a cut over the ganglion and separate the ganglion from the nearby tendons, nerves and blood vessels. They will then remove the ganglion.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring

2 Specific complications

- Damage to an artery
- Damage to small nerves near the ganglion
- Continued aching in your wrist
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of the limb (complex regional pain syndrome)

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, you should ask a member of the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The joint where the ganglion was can continue to ache but any joint stiffness should get better fairly quickly.

Some ganglions come back after a few months or years.

Summary

A ganglion is not serious. If it is causing trouble, your surgeon can remove it.

Acknowledgements

Author: Mr Stephen Milner DM FRCS (Tr. & Orth.)
Illustrations: Hannah Ravenscroft RM

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