

Ganglion Cyst

Information for Patients

Background

Your GP has referred you to the Hand Unit at St John's Hospital because of the swelling around your wrist. From your GP's description it is likely that you have a ganglion cyst.

What is a ganglion cyst?

A ganglion is a smooth lump under the skin due to a cyst which contains a thick, jelly-like fluid and can vary in size. It may look something like the pictures below.



Treatment

Wrist ganglion cysts are harmless and can be safely left alone. Nearly all eventually disappear and usually cause little trouble. There are no long term problems from not treating the ganglion. Although we can remove the fluid with a needle and syringe, it comes back again in up to 80% of (8 out of 10) cases within weeks or months.

We do not routinely recommend surgery for a simple ganglion in the NHS across Scotland as:

- Surgery results in a permanent scar
- The ganglion may come back after surgery
- Occasionally surgery can cause nerve damage, stiffness and chronic pain may occur.

Therefore, we do not routinely provide a hospital appointment for people with wrist ganglions.

There is further information about ganglion cysts on the attached page, from the British Society for Surgery of the Hand (BSSH).

Further information

If you feel that the lump described does not fit with your symptoms and wrist, and you feel you should be seen in the Hand Clinic, please call our Hand Unit administrator on Tel 01506 523128 to go onto the waiting list for a clinic appointment which will be posted out to you.

Interpretation and Translation

For a copy of this document in large print, Braille or your community language please contact the department on Tel 01506 523128