

Patient Information Leaflet

Excision of Ganglion

Produced by: Orthopaedic Department

**September 2013
Review due September 2016**



If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Quality Team, telephone 01983 534850, who will advise you.

You are coming into hospital to undergo an Excision of Ganglion. This information booklet has been designed with YOU in mind. We hope it will help alleviate any worries you may have about your forthcoming operation.

It is natural to be apprehensive about any operation – we understand this. So, if you have any particular worries let the staff know so we can help.

What is a Ganglion?

A ganglion is a swelling that arises from a joint or tendon sheath. It is filled with thick jelly like material that is produced by the lining tissue of the joint or tendon. ***They are completely innocent and benign.*** They typically occur on the back of the wrist but they can occur near other joints (commonly the knee and ankle) or near tendons. They usually occur in young adults. It is not known why they occur. In children, ganglions usually disappear without any treatment. This can also happen in adults.

The operation

You will usually be given a general anaesthetic. Having a general anaesthetic means that you will be completely asleep during the operation. A cut is made in the skin that is at least as wide as the lump. The ganglion is then removed. The skin wound is then closed up with stitches. A bandage is usually put over the stitches. The ganglion may come back in a minority of patients.

Any alternatives

You could do nothing and wait to see if your ganglion disappears. The contents of a ganglion can be removed with a needle and syringe. This is called aspiration. Steroid is usually injected at the same time to prevent recurrence, but the chance of the ganglion recurring is higher with this treatment than with surgery. Aspiration of your ganglion is done in the out-patient department, though it can also be done by your GP in his surgery. The skin over your lump is cleaned and frozen with a small local anaesthetic injection. The doctor will drain out as much of the contents of your ganglion as possible with a large needle and syringe, following which Steroid is injected. The steroid injection can be uncomfortable. A sticky plaster is put over the needle hole. You should remove this plaster after 6 hours. If a doctor has tried curing your ganglion with a needle and syringe and it has returned, probably the best plan is to have an operation.

After the operation

Usually the wound is pain-free. You may feel some slight discomfort. You will be given painkillers to take home. They should easily control this discomfort.

After an hour or two on the ward, you should feel fit enough to go home. Before you go, the hospital will:

- Check the wound is comfortable
- Check the wound is not bleeding
- Check there is no swelling
- Give you painkilling tablets to take home
- Give you a note to give to your General Practitioner
- Give you a work certificate, sick note, etc.
- Check you have the ward telephone number
- Make sure a relative or friend can take you home.

You should not be by yourself for the first day after your operation. At home, rest. Your operation site will be in a bulky bandage when you go home. If the ganglion was on your wrist, you cannot drive whilst your hand is in the bandage. Your bandage will be lightened after 48 hours and your stitches taken out about ten days after the operation, by your GP's nurse. You will not need a dressing on the wound after that. You may remove the sling to wash. Wash around the bandage for the first ten days. You can wash the wound area as soon as the dressing has been removed. Soap and warm tap water are entirely adequate. Salted water is not necessary. You can shower or take a bath as often as you like.

After 24 hours, your operation site should not hurt much. If you have severe pain, telephone the ward. If you cannot get through to the ward, go straight away to the Accident & Emergency Department of the hospital. If the ganglion was on your wrist you must move your fingers regularly.

How soon you can return to work depends on your job and the site of the operation. This also depends on you being able to get to work. If your job is heavy you may be unable to work for three weeks.

You may swim and play most sports once your stitches are out. When you start playing, you will not be able to play for as long as normal and your joint may ache at the end of a game.

What are the risks

Complications are rare and seldom serious. The ganglion may come back in a minority of patients. The skin around the scar may be permanently numb after your operation.

Any surgical wound can become infected but the risk is quite low.

Valuables should not be brought into the hospital. If patients have to bring in valuable items they should ask a nurse to store them safely and request a receipt for the items. You may not be able to have the valuable items returned if the time of discharge from hospital is out of hours.

We are sorry but the Trust cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items not given for safe keeping.

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues through NHS interactive available through Sky TV or online at: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call the NHS 111 service on: 111

We Value Your Views On Our Service

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the Quality Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on 534850.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust
St Mary's Hospital
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 03000 61 61 61 or at enquires@cqc.org.uk

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.

Ref: O/GAN/4