

Dorsal Wrist Ganglion



What is a ganglion:

A ganglion cyst contains a thick, clear, mucus-like fluid similar to the fluid found in the joint. Women are more likely to be affected than men. Ganglia are common among gymnasts, people who practice yoga, who repeatedly apply stress to the wrist. Ganglion cysts arise from the capsule of a joint or the sheath of a tendon. They can be found at different places on the wrist. A ganglion cyst that grows on the top of the wrist is called a dorsal ganglion. Others are found on the volar wrist - Palm / thumb side of the wrist
Mucous cyst - The end joint of a finger associated with arthritis & may cause finger nail deformity or ridging
Flexor sheath ganglion - Base of a finger arising from the sheath around the tendons
Most of the time, these are harmless and will often disappear in time.

Symptoms:

Because the fluid-filled sac puts pressure on the nerves that pass through the joint, some ganglion cysts may be painful. Large ganglia, even if they are not painful, are unattractive. Smaller ganglions that remain hidden under the skin (occult

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o She has contributed to a book on Arthritis, presented to support groups etc.

o She was the President of the California Chapter of ASHT & has won the best chapter award for her term in 2010 & 2011.

o She is a partner/principal in Advanced Rehab Seminars & provides continuing education seminars to other hand & upper extremity therapists nationwide.

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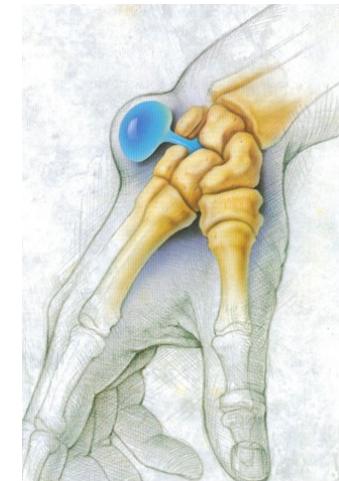
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Dorsal Ganglion

ganglions) may be quite painful.

A ganglion grows out of a joint, like a balloon on a stalk. It rises out of the connective tissues between bones and muscles. Inside the balloon is a thick, slippery fluid similar to the fluid in your joints. Usually, the more active the wrist, the larger the cyst becomes. With rest, the lump generally decreases in size.

Diagnosis:

Your doctor may ask you how long you have had the ganglion, whether it changes in size, and whether it is painful. Pressure may be applied to identify any tenderness. A penlight may be held up to the cyst to see whether light shines through. X-rays may be taken to rule out other conditions, such as arthritis or



a bone tumor. Sometimes, an MRI or ultrasound is needed to find a ganglion cyst that is not visible.



Treatment:

Initial treatment is not surgical.

- **Observation.** Because the ganglion is not cancerous and may disappear in time, just waiting and watching may be enough to make sure that no unusual changes occur.
- **Immobilization.** Activity often causes the ganglion to increase in size. This is because activity increases pressure on nerves, causing pain. A wrist brace or splint may relieve symptoms, letting the ganglion decrease in size. As pain decreases, your doctor may prescribe exercises to improve flexibility and range of motion.
- **Activity modification** may also be recommended to prevent recurrences. In-order to achieve this your therapist may tape your wrist to encourage correct positioning of the wrist with certain activities. Weight bearing activities may be restricted until symptoms are reduced.
- **Modalities.** Your therapist may perform ultrasound and iontophoresis to decrease symptoms. Ice can also help reduce symptoms.
- **Aspiration.** If the ganglion causes a great deal of pain or severely limits activities, the

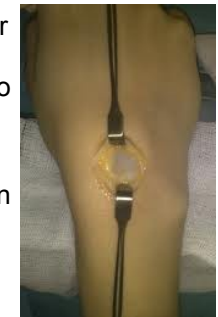


fluid may be drained from it. This procedure is called "aspiration." The area around the ganglion cyst is numbed and the

cyst is punctured with a needle so that the fluid drains away.

Nonsurgical treatment leaves the outer shell and the stalk of the ganglion intact, so it may reform and reappear.

The ganglion cyst can be removed through outpatient surgery, but this is no guarantee that the cyst will not grow again. Surgery may also include removing part of the involved joint capsule or tendon sheath. There may be some tenderness, discomfort, and swelling after surgery. Normal activities usually may be resumed two to six weeks after surgery. Early intervention with therapy helps with preventing scarring and improving ROM, thus getting the patient back to normal faster.



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