

# Removal of a ganglion

## Day Surgery Unit Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who are considering surgery for removal of a ganglion. It gives information on what happens during the procedure, and the risks and benefits of it.

### What is a ganglion?

A ganglion is a collection of thick fluid, known as synovial fluid, found in the soft tissues around joints and tendons. They vary in size from the size of a pea to the size of a golf ball.

Ganglions usually appear in early adult life and are particularly noticeable on the back of wrists. They can also appear on the front of the wrist and on any joint in the body.

It is not clear why ganglions form. They seem to occur when the synovial fluid that surrounds a joint or tendon leaks out and collects in a sac.

They are harmless but can be painful. They can cause an ache after the joint is used, and can interfere with the function of the joint.

## What is the treatment?

Ganglions can sometimes burst or disappear on their own after an accidental blow. Treatment is only usually recommended if they are causing problems with the movement of a joint, or pressing on a nerve and causing pain and pins and needles.

The two main treatment options are:

- Draining fluid out of the cyst with a needle and syringe – the medical name for this is aspiration
- Cutting the ganglion out using surgery

This leaflet is about surgery to remove a ganglion. This is usually carried out using a local anaesthetic. This means you will be given an injection to numb the area and will be awake for the procedure. The surgeon will discuss this with you in more detail.

## What are the benefits of surgery?

If you are suffering pain or loss of movement from the ganglion, removing it by surgery should improve this. However, the benefits need to be weighed up against the risks of surgery.

## What are the risks of surgery?

There is always a small element of risk involved with any surgery. The main risks are:

- Your scar can often look worse than the ganglion.
- The soft tissue swelling at the site of the operation can be almost as large as the original ganglion and can take up to six months to heal.
- A new ganglion may form in the place of the original.
- A wide area of tissue at the base of your ganglion needs to be removed as well to lessen the chance of it coming back. This can cause discomfort.
- Pain may last six months after the operation.

## What are the alternatives?

You do not need to have surgery and it will only be suggested if your ganglion is persistent and painful.

## What happens before the operation?

You will be asked to come for a health assessment with a nurse, usually about one or two weeks before your surgery. This will determine whether there are any reasons why you should not have surgery.

During this health assessment we will:

- Check your suitability for anaesthetic.
- Give you information about the surgery and recovery process. It is important that you know what to do to help your recovery.
- Carry out investigations to ensure that you are fit and well to have the surgery.

A range of investigations will be carried out such as:

- A blood test, if you take certain medications.
- You may have an ECG – a heart trace test. This is nothing to be alarmed about, just a routine test to check your heart.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and weight will be recorded.
- You will be screened for MRSA – a nasal and groin swab will be taken to see if you have any evidence of infection.
- A finger prick test to check your blood glucose levels.

We will give you instructions about whether you need to stop eating and drinking before your operation.

You will have the opportunity to ask any questions or discuss any problems you may have.

At this assessment, please tell us if:

- You are diabetic
- You have a cold, cough or any type of infection
- You take any medications and what these are. You may need to stop taking some of these for a short period of time before you have the operation.

## What if I become ill before my operation?

It is important that you tell us if you are not well enough to come in for the operation. Please ring one of the following numbers:

- Day Surgery Unit on 01384 456111 ext. 1886
- Pre-assessment Unit on 01384 456111 ext. 1849

Also, please ring us if you have any type of infection such as:

- a chesty cough, cold or throat infection
- skin problems such as a rash, cut or skin infection, especially if it is on the area that is to be operated on
- diarrhoea and sickness in the last 48 hours

If you are not sure and want to ask about this, please ring for advice.

## What do I need to bring for my operation?

Please bring a dressing gown, slippers and any medication you are currently taking. It is likely you will only be in hospital for the day but just in case you need to stay overnight, please bring an overnight bag with nightwear, toiletries etc. We will tell you during the health assessment you have before your operation, if you will have to stay overnight.

Please do not wear or bring any jewellery. However, you can wear your wedding ring.

Please do not wear any make up; or nail varnish or gel nails on your fingers or toes.

## Personal property

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust and its staff cannot be held responsible for the personal property of patients or visitors.

You are advised not to bring valuable items with you. Where this is unavoidable, please note that the hospital cannot accept responsibility for your property unless it is handed to a staff member for safekeeping and an official receipt is obtained.

## What happens when I come for my operation?

When you arrive, you will be taken to an admission area. Here you will be seen by:

- a member of the surgical team who will explain the operation to you. If you are happy to go ahead with the operation, they will ask you to sign a consent form.
- the anaesthetist, if you are having sedation or a general anaesthetic.
- a member of the nursing staff.

The nurse will check your blood pressure, temperature and pulse. They will talk through what will happen and check for your understanding of this. They will give you an approximate time for your operation.

Unfortunately, you may sometimes have to wait for a number of hours for your surgery. We do appreciate how difficult and inconvenient this might be and we try to minimise delays for all patients as much as possible.

The nurse will ask you to undress and put on a theatre gown shortly before your surgery. A nurse will take you to the operating theatre. A member of the theatre team will check your personal details with you. You will then be given the anaesthetic.

## What happens after operation?

A nurse will monitor your blood pressure, pulse and temperature. They will observe your hand or foot for colour, warmth and feeling. You may have to sit with your hand or foot raised, depending on which area has been operated on.

We will ask you if you have any pain and give you painkiller tablets if you need them.

Once you have had something to eat and drink, and have been to the toilet, you will be able to get out of bed on your own.

You will be able to go home when you are comfortable and have recovered from the anaesthetic.

## What happens when I go home?

If you go home the same day as the operation, you will need to have someone to care for you for at least the first 24 hours.

You must not drive yourself home. You will not be able to go home on public transport on your own. Therefore, you will need to arrange for someone to collect you and take you home.

The nurse who discharges you from hospital will give you a letter for your GP, a sick note if you need it and any medication that has been prescribed for you.

We will give you instructions on caring for your wound. You will need to keep your wound clean and dry. If you have any problems with your dressing, or any other queries, please contact:

**Russells Hall Hospital Day Surgery Unit** on  
01384 456111 ext. 1886 (7.30am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)

## When can I go back to work?

It is a good idea to wait until your stitches have been taken out, after about 14 days. If you do manual work, you may need to stay off a little longer.

## **Will I be able to drive?**

It is very important that you check with your insurance company as to when you can drive again after surgery.

You will need to avoid driving until your stitches have been taken out. Do not drive if you have any discomfort that may distract you.

## **What follow up care will I receive?**

We will give you an appointment for your stitches to be taken out about 10 to 14 days after your operation.

## **Can I find out more?**

You can find out more from the following weblink:

### **NHS Choices**

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Excisionofganglion/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

## Helpline numbers

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to a member of staff or contact:

### **Russells Hall Hospital Day Surgery Unit on**

01384 456111 ext. 1886 (7.30am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)

or

### **Pre-operative Assessment Unit on**

01384 456111 ext. 1849 (7am to 7.30pm, Monday to Friday)

**Out of these hours, urgent queries:** contact Surgical Assessment Unit on 01384 456111 ext. 3359.

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

### **This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/general-surgery/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للوصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ، ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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