

GANGLION CYST

A ganglion cyst is a benign growth. A ganglion cyst is a small sac just underneath the surface of the skin and often on top of a joint or tendon. It is helpful to think of the ganglion cyst as a small pea or grape under the skin. Within the ganglion cyst is a thick, jelly like material. This growth is harmless and not cancerous.

Ganglion cysts are also referred to as "Bible cysts". In the past, doctors would tell people that if the cyst was traumatized it could go away on its own. Historically the largest hard cover book in the home was the Bible so people would actually smash the cyst with the Bible. We highly recommend against this today due to potential for damaging surrounding bones and tissues.

A ganglion cyst is often located on the wrist, finger joints, top of the foot, and outside the knee and ankle. It is also possible to develop a ganglion cyst on any part of the body. It is not known what exactly causes a ganglion cyst to appear. Joints or tendons that have been injured in the past are more likely to develop ganglion cysts.

Most people notice these as round bumps or lumps under the skin. They are usually smaller than an inch in diameter, but it is possible for them to be larger. It is common for the size of a ganglion cyst to change with movement.

Ganglion cysts are usually painless. Most of the time, treatment is not required. Sometimes they go away without any treatment. However, it is still possible for ganglion cysts to cause local symptoms such as mild swelling and pain depending on their size and location. If you have any symptoms, please let me know.

If treatment is necessary, it is possible to surgically remove the cyst. Removal is usually a minor surgical procedure with a few stitches. Occasionally the cyst can be drained by a surgeon.

As I noted above, a ganglion cyst is a benign growth. Unless there are specific problems, they are often left alone. If you have other questions regarding these growths, please ask me before you leave the office.