

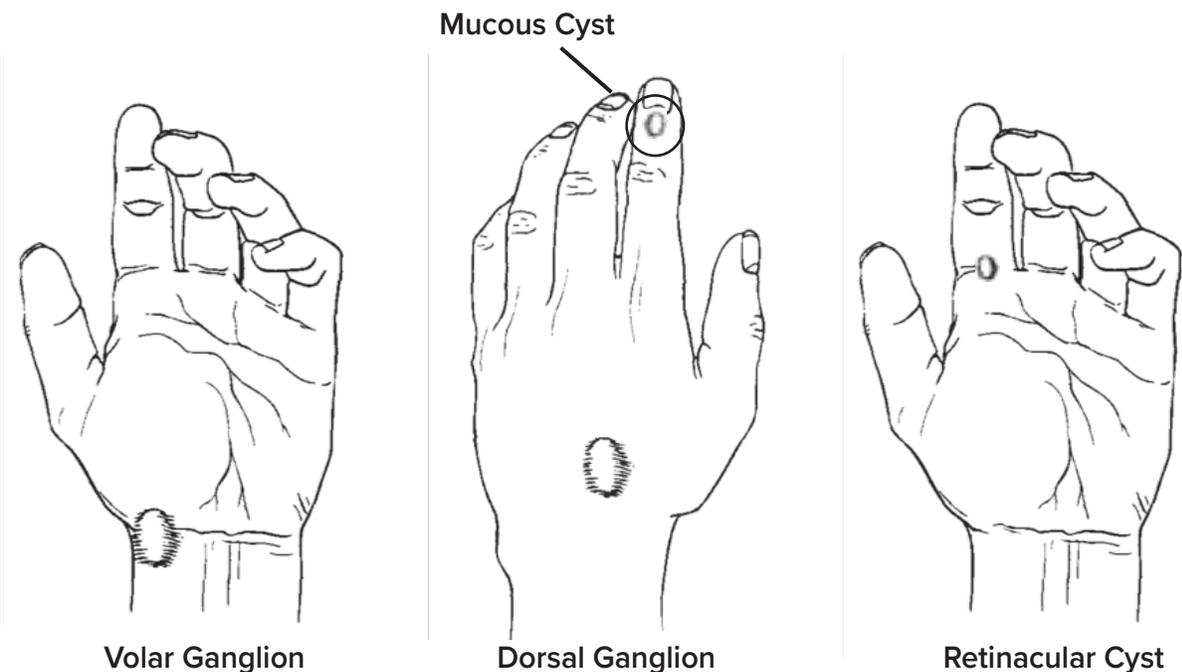
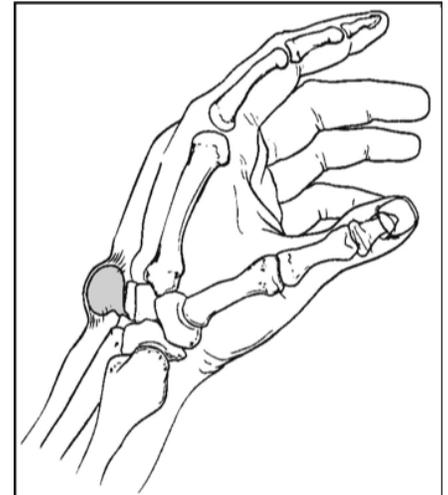
Definition

A ganglion is a balloon-like structure that arises from a joint or tendon. The fluid from the joint or tendon escapes through a one-way valve and cannot freely return.

Clinical Symptoms

A *wrist* ganglion appears as an unexplained lump or bump on the front or back of the wrist. It may or may not be painful. You may find that it is the size of a pea or grape or walnut. You may notice that the bump can get larger with activity and get smaller with rest.

A *finger* ganglion, or retinacular cyst, appears as a bump at the base of the finger in the palm. You may find that this bump gets in the way when you grip onto things. It is more annoying than painful.

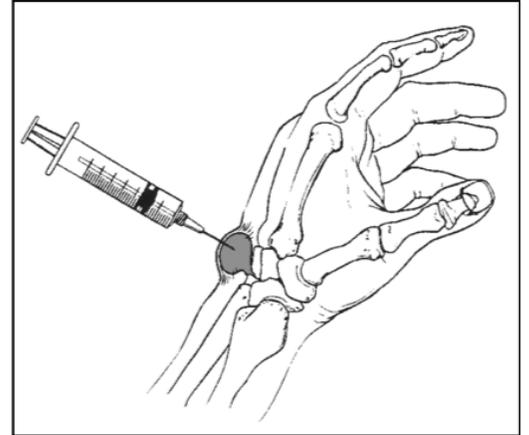


Who gets Ganglions?

Anyone can get them. The cause of ganglions remains controversial.

How do you know I have a Ganglion and not something else?

The symptoms that people relay are common and tests performed in the office can confirm the problem. I will take a thorough history and then examine your wrist and fingers. Since this condition is one of fluid escaping, I will focus on determining if the bump is most likely caused by fluid or something else. Occasionally, ganglions of the wrist are caused by arthritis of the wrist.



What is the treatment?

Ganglions may be punctured with a needle or removed with surgery. Puncturing the ganglion and removing the fluid is like popping a balloon filled with clear jelly. More than half of the time the ganglion returns.

An operation has a better than 95% success rate. A small incision (3 to 4 cm) is used and the ganglion is removed and the one-way valve closed.

A new operation has been developed for ganglions on the back of the wrist. As an alternative to the one to two inch incision, two very small incisions can be use in conjunction with wrist arthroscopy to deflate the ganglion.

What is the recovery like?

In the *finger*, a bulky dressing is used for a few days and then removed. Finger motion is allowed without restriction once the incision is healed.

In the *wrist*, a bulky bandage is used for several days. A wrist splint is used post-operatively for a short period of time. You are allowed to use your fingers the very first day. After the stitches are removed you are allowed to perform light activities. With-in three to four weeks, most people are using their hand normally.

The most notable feeling after surgery for a wrist ganglion is stiffness. This stiffness is expected for about four to six weeks.

Will I need therapy afterward?

Most people will benefit from a short course of therapy to improve motion and strength and this is individualized to your particular circumstances.

Other sources of information on this topic

American Society for Surgery of the Hand

www.hand-surg.org

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

www.assh.org