

# Mucous Cyst

## Why does it occur?

A Mucous cyst is a fluid filled sac that occurs at the end finger joint (DIP joint). They are caused by a small extra growth of bone around the joint called an osteophyte that occurs as a result of arthritis. The cyst and bone may place pressure on the growing part of the nail (nailbed) to cause uneven nail growth.



## Symptoms

A small cyst or swelling develops on the back or side of the joint. The joint may be stiff and tender. The overlying skin may become thin and even breakdown. It is often painful and unsightly. The cyst may discharge or erupt straw-coloured fluid.

## Non-operative treatment

If it does not cause a problem it is recommended to leave it alone.

## Surgery

Before you come into hospital for your surgery please make sure that you have removed all jewellery, especially rings on the hand that is to be operated on. Also please take off any nail varnish, gel or false nails (if they come off easily without causing damage to the real nail beneath).

If the mucous cyst is causing distressing or intrusive symptoms, it is possible to consider surgery. The surgery is a day-case procedure usually performed under local anaesthetic. Local anaesthesia is injected at the base of the finger. Once numb, the skin is cut and the cyst removed. If any small extra bony projections (osteophytes) are seen, your surgeon may remove it. The skin is stitched and a bulky dressing is applied. Stitches will remain in for 14 days and are usually removed at your GP practice.

Keep your hand raised as much as possible for the first five days to prevent the hand and fingers swelling. Gently bend and straighten the fingers from day one.

## What are the possible complications?

A small number of patients may experience the following:

- Delayed wound healing
- Stiffness
- Altered sensation
- Swelling
- Pain
- Infection
- Recurrence

## How long will I be off work?

You can expect to return to work within two weeks for a non-manual job, and four weeks for a job that involves manual labour.

## When can I drive?

Please expect to be unable to drive for the first two weeks following the operation – this can vary in individuals however. You should be able to grip the steering wheel without pain or distraction, look over your shoulder and perform an emergency stop. You are advised to inform your insurance provider in advance to returning to driving.



## PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

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### Further information

The day surgery unit can be contacted on 02476 966861 / 02476 966868 (University Hospital), or on 01788 663264 (Hospital of St. Cross). For further information please contact Hand Therapy:

- at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire on 02476 966016
- at Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby on 01788 663257
- our specialist hand surgery nurse / hand-coordinator on 02476 965072

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 02476 966861 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### Document History

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