

Trauma and Orthopaedics

Mucous Cyst

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, which develops because of arthritis. The cyst and bone may place pressure on the growing part of the nail (nailbed), causing uneven nail growth.



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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. The cyst is often painful and unsightly. It may discharge or erupt with straw-coloured fluid. Occasionally, an infection may develop.

Non-operative treatment

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



Patient Information

Surgery

Before you come into hospital for your surgery, please make sure to remove all jewellery, especially rings on the hand that will be operated on. Also, remove 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, surgery may be considered. The surgery is a day-case procedure usually performed under local anaesthesia. 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 them. The skin is then stitched, and a bulky dressing is applied. Stitches will remain for 14 days and are usually removed at your GP practice.

Keep your hand raised as much as possible for the first 5 days to prevent swelling in the hand and fingers. Gently bend and straighten the fingers from day one.

What are the possible complications?

Some patients may experience the following:

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

How long will you be off work and when can you drive?

Driving: It is your responsibility to make sure you are safe to drive. You cannot drive yourself home after surgery. Legally, you must be always in full control of your vehicle. Wait until your level of pain and function allow

Patient Information

you to grip the steering wheel tightly without any distracting pain before resuming driving.

Returning to work: Light or desk-based work may be possible after 2 to 3 weeks depending on your recovery progress. For heavy manual labour, it's advisable to wait 4 to 6 weeks before resuming work. You can discuss this further with your doctor if you remain unsure.

Returning to work will depend on your type of job. You should be able to do most everyday activities with any splints or strapping that may have been provided. Please speak to your doctor about this, and do not resume sporting activities until you are told that it is safe to do so.

Further information

For further information please contact:

- The day surgery unit at University Hospital Coventry on 024 7696 6861/024 7696 6868
- The day surgery unit at Hospital of St. Cross (Rugby) on 01788 663264
- Plaster room technicians at University Hospital Coventry on 024 7696 6909
- Plaster room technicians at Hospital of St. Cross (Rugby) on 01788 669143.
- Specialist hand surgery nurse/hand-coordinator on 024 76 96 5072
- Hand Therapy at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire on 024 7696 6016
- Hand Therapy at Hospital of St. Cross(Rugby) on 01788 663257

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 76 96 6861 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Patient Information

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