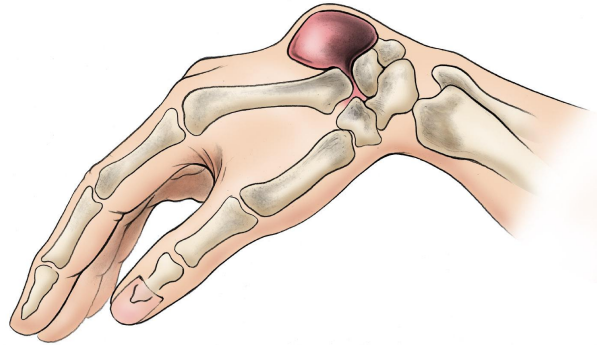


## Ganglion Cyst of the Wrist, Hand, and Finger

**Ganglion cysts** are the most common mass or lump in the hand. They are not cancerous, and in most cases, are harmless. They occur in various locations but most frequently develop on the back of the wrist.

These fluid-filled cysts can quickly appear, disappear, and change size. Many ganglion cysts do not require treatment. However, if the cyst is painful, interferes with function, or has an unacceptable appearance, there are several treatment options available.



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### Nonsurgical Treatment

Initial treatment of a ganglion cyst is not surgical.

- **Observation:** Because the ganglion is not cancerous and may disappear in time, if you do not have symptoms, your provider may recommend just waiting and watching to make sure that no unusual changes occur.
- **Immobilization:** Activity often causes the ganglion to increase in size and also increases pressure on nerves, thereby causing pain. A wrist brace or splint may relieve symptoms and cause the ganglion to decrease in size. As pain decreases, your provider may prescribe exercises to strengthen the wrist and improve range of motion.
- **Aspiration:** If the ganglion causes a great deal of pain or severely limits activities, the fluid may be drained from it.

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### Surgical Treatment

Your provider may recommend surgery if your symptoms are not relieved by nonsurgical methods, or if the ganglion returns after aspiration. The procedure to remove a ganglion cyst is called an **excision**.

Surgery involves removing the cyst as well as part of the involved joint capsule or tendon sheath, which is considered the root of the ganglion. Even after excision, there is a small chance the ganglion will return.