

NICHOLAS T. HADDOCK, M.D.

Ganglion Cyst Surgery

Patient Care Instructions

General Information

Ganglion cysts are very common lumps within the hand and wrist that occur adjacent to joints or tendons. The most common locations are the top of the wrist, the palm side of the wrist, the base of the finger on the palm side, and the top of the end joint of the finger. The ganglion cyst often resembles a water balloon on a stalk, and is filled with clear fluid or gel. The cause of these cysts is unknown although they may form in the presence of joint or tendon irritation or mechanical changes. They occur in patients of all ages. These cysts may change in size or even disappear completely, and they may or may not be painful. These cysts are not cancerous and will not spread to other areas. Surgery involves removing the cyst along with a portion of the joint capsule or tendon sheath. This is done as an outpatient surgery.

Things to handle prior to your surgery

Arrange for someone to drive you home from the hospital and stay with you for 1 day.

Medications will be called into your pharmacy. These can be picked up prior to surgery.

Protein supplementation can be started one to two weeks before surgery and should include over 20 grams of additional protein daily.

Review the attached list of medications to avoid prior to surgery. If you have any further questions that were not addressed during your consultation then please call Dr. Haddock's nurse (Tina Ethridge) at (214) 645-2353. If you are unsure if you can stop medications then please call the prescribing provider to confirm if this is medically safe.

For your convenience, we have included a *Suggested Shopping List* in the addendum to these instructions (page 4).

Pre-Operative Guidelines

Smoking should be stopped a minimum of 4 weeks prior to surgery. Smoking should be avoided for at least 4 weeks after surgery as well. Smoking can greatly interfere with healing and lead to postoperative complications.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. This includes no water, gum, or hard candy. Blood pressure and/or heart medications can be taken with a sip of water as directed by your prescribing physician.

If you take medication for diabetes then confirm with your prescribing physician how to manage these medications prior to surgery.

If you are prone to nausea or motion sickness let your anesthesiologist know on the day of surgery. Medications can be started prior to surgery or during surgery to help improve your postoperative experience.

Post-Operative Care

Take pain medication as prescribed. Tylenol alone can also be taken but do not exceed a total of 3000 mg of Tylenol daily. The typically prescribed pain medication has Tylenol in it so this must be accounted for if taken. Do not drink alcohol with these medications.

Take a suggested stool softener/laxative until bowels begin to function normally after surgery. A combination of anesthesia and pain medication usually makes these necessary for a few days.

Keep your arm elevated for the first 2 days following surgery.

Follow a well-balanced diet, which includes protein and is limited in salt intake. A high salt diet or meal, can lead to increased swelling and prolonged recovery. It is best to continue the protein supplementation for approximately 3 weeks after surgery.

Oral hydration should include the use of electrolyte containing fluids such as Gatorade or a low calorie substitute. Limit the amount of caffeinated beverages as they can promote dehydration; however Dr. Haddock recommends you maintain your daily average of caffeine to avoid headaches.

Activity Restrictions

Walking is encouraged shortly after the operation and can be increased over the first 2 weeks. Light cardiovascular exercise can be resumed after 3 weeks and progressed as tolerated over the following 3 weeks.

Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 4 weeks.

Do not drive while taking any prescription pain medication.

Limit the use of your hand that was operated on. Any areas that are not included within the dressing can be gently moved but try to limit the movement of any portions within the dressing.

Incision Care

Depending on the location of your cyst you may have external sutures placed. If so then these will be removed approximately 14 days after surgery.

You may shower after the operation, but the dressing should remain dry and in place for 3 days. You can use a plastic bag to protect it in the shower.

The dressing can be removed in 3 days if desired. At that point, warm soapy water can run over the incision. Do not scrub or soak the incision.

If desired, a dry dressing can be replaced daily after you shower.

What to Expect after Ganglion Cyst Surgery

It can take weeks to months for the nerve symptoms to resolve. In some situations not all symptoms resolve. Typically, the waking at night with a numb hand resolves first.

Pain around the incision may remain for approximately 6 or more weeks.

You can expect some slight oozing (bloody) from the stitch lines and swelling of the incisions. Gauze can be reapplied if it is bothersome.

When to Call the Office

If you have increasing redness or swelling around the incision.

If you have severe pain not relieved by pain medication.

If you have any side effects from the medication: rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have fever over 101.

If you have yellow or greenish drainage from an incision or notice a foul odor.

For medical questions, please call: Tina Ethridge, RN at (214) 645-2353.

Dr. Haddock will be paged/called on his cell phone for any urgent or emergent medical issues.

Follow-up Care and Appointments

You will be seen by Dr. Haddock approximately 14 days after the surgery. If present sutures will be at that visit. You will be seen again at 6 weeks.

Call to schedule your appointments at the UT Southwestern Medical Center Plastic Surgery Clinic at (214) 645-2353.

For any surgical scheduling concerns, please call: Lindsay Carpenter at (214) 645-3118

For medical questions, please call: Tina Ethridge, RN at (214) 645-2353

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Suggested Shopping List

Items to have on hand prior to surgery

Ganglion Cyst Surgery

- Prescriptions will be called into your local pharmacy as ordered by Dr. Haddock. Typical medications are as follows but these will be tailored to your needs.
 - Tylenol #3 or Tramadol (pain medication)

- Tylenol

- Gatorade or another low calorie alternative, such as water with electrolytes

- Protein Supplements

- Stool softener / laxative (choose one):
 - Docusate (Colace) 100 mg orally twice daily when taking pain medication
 - Milk of Magnesia 30cc/1 Tablespoon twice daily when taking pain medication
 - Prune juice or Sorbitol orally
 - Biscodyl or Magnesium Citrate as needed for constipation