



After Your Ganglion Cyst Excision Surgery

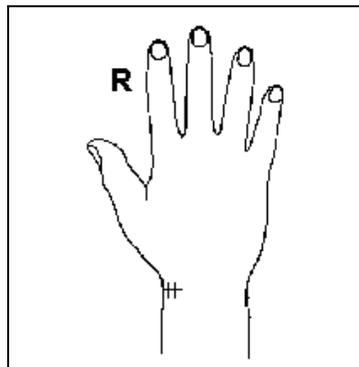
Self-care and follow-up

This handout explains follow-up care after surgery to remove a ganglion cyst.

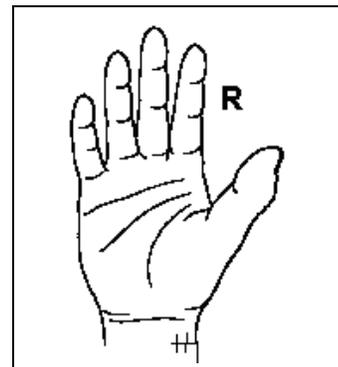
If your incision is red or there is drainage coming from it, call us right away at the phone numbers listed on the next page. Go to the emergency room if this occurs at night or on a weekend.

Wound Care

- After surgery, your hand and wrist will be covered by a *dressing* (bandage) and placed in a plaster splint that you will wear for 5 days. The splint helps protect the incision site and lessens swelling.
- 5 days after surgery, you may remove all of the dressing and splint from your incision. Put a small bandage over the sutures to keep them from getting caught on your clothes or other fabrics.
- Do **not** put any ointment or lotion on your wound.
- When bathing for the first 5 days after surgery, cover your hand with a plastic bag to keep the splint dry. After you remove the splint and dressing (5 days after surgery), you may shower without covering the incision, but do **not** soak your hand in a bathtub, hot tub, kitchen sink, swimming pool, etc.
- Your wrist and palm may swell. Use an ice pack for up to 20 minutes at a time over the surgical site to help ease swelling. Be sure to place a thin cloth between your skin and the ice pack to protect your skin.
- Elevate your hand as much as possible to lessen swelling and pain.



The incision site on the back of a right hand.



The incision site on the front of a right hand.

Questions or Concerns?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: Call the Hand Center at **206-598-4263**.

After office hours and on weekends and holidays: Call the hospital operator at **206-598-6190**. Ask for the Hand Fellow on call to be paged. Your call will be returned.

For more information, please visit the Hand Center online at www.uwhand.com.

Pain Management

- You will receive a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. Take this medicine only if you need it.
- Be sure to talk with the clinic nurse about how to take your pain medicine. To best manage your pain, you must take your pain medicine the way it was prescribed. Taking the correct dose at the right time is very important.
- If you have uncomfortable side effects from the pain medicine, call the nurse at 206-598-4263.
- Please see “Medications After Surgery” for more instructions.

Driving

- Do **not** drive if you are taking narcotic pain medicine. It is not safe. The medicine can make you sleepy and delay your reaction time.
- Once you are no longer taking the medicine, you may drive as soon as you can comfortably grip the steering wheel with both hands.

Activity

- You can use your hand for light daily activities such as getting dressed, typing, etc.
- Do **not** lift objects heavier than a full soda can (about 1 pound or .45 kilogram) until your sutures have been removed.
- Avoid heavy repetitive activities such as hammering. These increase scarring after surgery and may lead to a longer recovery time.
- Avoid any heavy lifting, such as weight lifting, until 4 weeks after surgery.

Follow-up

When you leave the surgery center, you should have a follow-up appointment in the Hand Center already set for 10 to 14 days after surgery. At this visit:

- Your sutures will be removed.
- You may also be referred to a physical therapist who will assess your progress. The therapist will also teach you exercises to help lessen scarring around the incision and increase your hand strength and range of motion. One therapy visit is usually enough to learn your home exercise program.
- After the sutures are removed, you can increase your activities as tolerated, but try to avoid heavy repetitive activities until 4 weeks after surgery.

Results

Most patients who have ganglion cyst surgery regain full use of their hand and full return of motion and strength.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

Hand Center

Box 354740

4245 Roosevelt Way N.E. Seattle, WA 98105

206-598-4263