

Ganglionic Cysts

There are many kinds of lumps and bumps seen at our podiatric office in Palm Desert, CA. One of the “bump” conditions seen and treated by Dr. Danciger is ganglion cysts.

What is a Ganglion Cyst?

A ganglion cyst is non-cancerous tumor or soft-tissue mass that is filled with a thick fluid. “Ganglion” actually means, “knot” and the sac often feels like a knot or bump underneath the surface of the skin.

The cyst is very common and develops on the top of a joint or on the covering of a tendon. They often appear on the wrist but when patients come in and see Dr. Danciger for treatment, the cyst has usually developed on the top of the foot. They can come on suddenly or appear over time and really vary from person to person. They can come and go and get smaller or larger depending on what types of activity a patient is involved in.

The cause of a ganglion cyst is unknown but they typically appear after an injury or trauma to the foot. They also are known to develop with people who have osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis increases fluid that can accumulate into a cyst.

What are the Symptoms of a Ganglion Cyst

If you have a ganglion cyst, there are several symptoms that are telling of the condition:

- A round, smooth lump that you can see, feel and that moves around under the skin.
- Tingling and numbness if the cyst is near a nerve
- Dull ache or pain
- Pain when wearing shoes
- Lump that gets larger when involved in activities that use the affected joint or tendon.

What is the Treatment for a Ganglion Cyst?

Many ganglion cysts will simply go away on their own. If you have no pain, can wear shoes comfortably and perform your necessary activities, Dr. Danciger will typically just monitor your cyst over time. If it becomes problematic, there are several treatment methods available. Dr. Danciger will most likely remove some of the fluid for evaluation and perform an x-ray to confirm the nature of the lump. After confirmation of the ganglion cyst, the following are some treatment options:

- A brace or splint to mobilize the foot as rest often helps to shrink the cyst.
- Modified footwear - Dr. Danciger can assist in finding appropriate shoes that help alleviate symptoms or provide pads to wear in shoes that lessen the pressure on the cyst.
- Fluid can be drained from the cyst and steroids injected to treat the cyst and reduce the likelihood of it returning. This treatment may take several sessions.
- Surgical removal of the cyst.

A ganglion cyst can be persistent and return after all of these treatment options. It is very important to avoid any at-home treatments such as trying to pop the cyst yourself with a needle. This will leave the cyst at risk for infection and cause further injury.