

GANGLIA POLICY

PRIOR APPROVAL

Ganglia are benign cysts that are found in various areas of the body, usually near a joint capsule, tendon or tendon sheath. Ganglia cysts contain a thick, clear mucous-like fluid and are most commonly associated with the wrist, hands, fingers and feet. There is a reasonable chance that ganglia will disappear spontaneously without any treatment, but should they persist they are unlikely to cause adverse long term effects.

Wrist ganglia have a high spontaneous resolution rate (it is suggested 50% over 5 years).

Treatment options include observation, aspiration/injection and surgical (open or arthroscopic) excision. Surgical excision causes restricted wrist and hand function for 4-6 weeks, may leave an unsightly scar and be complicated by recurrent ganglion formation. Further risks of surgery include pain, bleeding and infection. Although aspiration and surgery will remove ganglions in the short term, recurrence rates are high at approximately 70% and therefore a do-nothing approach may be the most beneficial to the patient in the long term. Pain associated with ganglia may be due to an underlying cause which is often connected with arthritis.

Commissioners will **ONLY** consider requests for treatment of Ganglion where there is evidence of:

- Significant functional impairment*

OR

- Doubt about the diagnosis. (If there is any uncertainty whether the ganglion may be malignant in nature, refer your patient via the 2 week wait referral route.)

To enable the assessment of individual requests, the following information with examples of significant functional impairment should be provided with the request:

- Precise location of ganglion e.g. flexor tendon
- Size in cm/inches (length and width)
- How functioning of the area is impaired? i.e. what is the patient unable to do?
- Impact on work/studies/care i.e. is the patient unable to fulfil any essential activities such as cooking, washing etc.
- Degree of pain and treatment of.
- How long it has existed and treatments tried to date.

**Significant functional impairment is defined by the CCGs' as:*

Symptoms preventing the patient fulfilling routine work or educational responsibilities

Symptoms preventing the patient carrying out routine domestic or carer activities

Reference:	Policy Name	Review Date	Version
BSW-CP017	Ganglia	October 2023	1