

What Is a Ganglion Cyst?

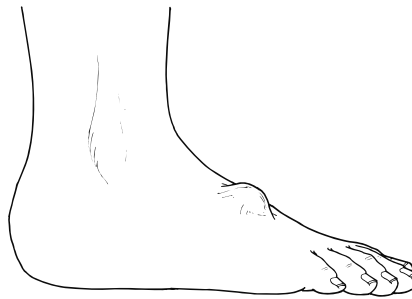
A ganglion cyst is a mass of tissue that is filled with a jelly-like fluid. The word “ganglion” means “knot” and is used to describe the knot-like mass or lump of cells that forms below the surface of the skin.

Ganglion cysts are among the most common benign soft-tissue masses. Although they most often occur on the wrist, they also frequently develop on the foot—usually on the top, but elsewhere as well. Ganglion cysts vary in size, may get smaller and larger over time and may even disappear, only to possibly return later.

Signs and Symptoms

A ganglion cyst is associated with one or more of the following signs and symptoms:

- A noticeable lump—often this is the only symptom experienced
- Tingling or burning, if the cyst is touching a nerve
- Dull pain or ache, which may indicate the cyst is pressing against a tendon or joint
- Difficulty wearing shoes due to irritation between the lump and the shoe



What Causes a Ganglion Cyst?

Ganglion cysts are usually caused by some type of injury. For example, a ganglion cyst might develop after something drops on the foot, if the foot was twisted while walking, or after too much stress was placed on a joint or tendon. For some patients, the trauma that triggers this condition is something they do not recall. Usually the cyst appears soon after the trauma occurs.

Diagnosis

To diagnose a ganglion cyst, the foot and ankle surgeon will perform a thorough examination of the foot. The lump will be visually apparent and, when pressed in a certain way, it should move freely underneath the skin. Sometimes the surgeon will shine a light through the cyst or remove a small amount of fluid from the cyst for evaluation. Occasionally other imaging studies may be used.

Treatment

There are various options for treating a ganglion cyst on the foot:

- **Monitoring, but no treatment.** If the cyst causes no pain and does not interfere with walking, the surgeon may decide it is best to carefully watch the cyst over a period of time.
- **Shoe modifications.** Wearing shoes that do not rub the cyst or cause irritation may be advised. In addition, placing a pad inside the shoe may help reduce pressure against the cyst.
- **Aspiration and injection.** This technique involves draining the fluid and then injecting a steroid medication into the mass. More than one session may be needed. Although this approach is successful in some cases, in many others the cyst returns.
- **Surgery.** When other treatment options fail or are not appropriate, the cyst may need to be surgically removed. While the recurrence rate associated with surgery is much lower than that experienced with aspiration and injection therapy, there are nevertheless cases in which the ganglion cyst returns. ▲



Melissa J. Lockwood, D.P.M.

Melissa J. Lockwood, D.P.M. – As founder of Heartland Foot and Ankle Associates, P.C., Dr. Melissa J. Lockwood happily returns to central Illinois after seven years in Cleveland, Ohio. She is a graduate of Providence Catholic High School in New Lenox, Illinois. Dr. Lockwood completed her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois (Urbana/Champaign) in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor degree in Chemistry. Dr. Lockwood has a great interest in archaeology and also received a minor degree in Anthropology from the U of I in 2001.

Dr. Lockwood went on to the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine and matriculated with her Podiatric Medical Degree in 2005. While at OCPM, Dr. Lockwood served as both a delegate to the student branch of the APMA as well as President of the Student Government organization (OPMSA). Dr. Lockwood was the recipient of several awards while attending OCPM, including the Ohio Podiatric Medical Association Dr. James Conforti Community Relations Award and the OCPM Mildred Kaufman Memorial Award for Proficiency in Orthopedics and Biomechanics.

Dr. Lockwood arrives in Bloomington following a three year residency in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Lockwood completed a 36 month Podiatric Medical and Surgical Residency Program based out of the University Hospital System/Richmond Heights Medical Center. Dr. Lockwood has extensive training in both forefoot (bunions, hammertoes, neuromas) elective surgical procedures as well as rearfoot reconstruction. She has a special interest in the treatment of chronic wounds as well as diabetic palliative care. Dr. Lockwood enjoys working with patients one on one in a clinical setting and chatting about her favorite sports teams!

Dr. Lockwood and her husband Scott are pleased to be back in their home state and rooting on the Illini, Redbirds, Chicago Bears, and White Sox! Scott is a 2000 Illinois State University Alumni with a BS degree in Accountancy. He is a CPA working in Bloomington.

EDUCATION

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, BS Biology (01)
Professional: Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine, (05)
Residency: University Hospital Richmond Medical Center (05-June 08)

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

NBPME Part I (03) NBPME Boards Part II & Part III - PM Lexus (05)
State of Illinois Licensure (08)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Illinois State Scholar (1997)
OCPM Academic Scholarship (01) OCPM Dean's List (04)
OPMA Dr. James Conforti Community Relations Award (05)
OCPM Mildred Kaufman Memorial Award for Proficiency in Orthopedics and Biomechanics (05)
University Hospitals Richmond Medical Center Outstanding Podiatric Resident(08)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

President, Ohio Podiatric Medical Student's Association (02-04)
Delegate, American Podiatric Medical Student's Association (02-04)
Chairman, President's Committee, American Podiatric Medical Student's Association Feb. 2004
Member – OCPM Board of Trustees (02-04)
APMA/IPMA, AAPP, AAWP member at large

RESEARCH/PUBLICATIONS

Sesamoid Pathology, coauthored with
Dr. Joseph Favazzo, D.P.M., December 2005. Compilation of forefoot pathology edited by Vincent J. Hetherington, D.P.M.



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American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons

This information has been prepared by the Consumer Education Committee of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, a professional society of 5,800 foot and ankle surgeons. Members of the College are Doctors of Podiatric Medicine who have received additional training through surgical residency programs.

The mission of the College is to promote superior care of foot and ankle surgical patients through education, research and the promotion of the highest professional standards.

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