Removal of soft tissue ‘lumps and bumps’

Information for patients
Department of Podiatric Surgery
What are soft tissue 'lumps and bumps'?

There are all manner of soft tissue lumps and bumps. In the foot these are very rarely malignant (cancerous). Before any treatment (non-surgical and surgical) we would refer you for an ultrasound scan to try to get a diagnosis of the lump. Typically these lumps are ganglions (fluid filled sacs arising from joints or tendon sheaths) or cysts. Occasionally they may be a tumour but are more often than not benign (harmless).

What are the treatment options?

Depending on the diagnosis, these can be left alone if they are not troublesome. There are sometimes both non-surgical and surgical options.

Non-surgical options

Some ganglions are amenable to being drained and occasionally a small amount of steroid is injected into the site. Unfortunately, the recurrence rate with this treatment is high.

Surgical options

These lumps can be surgically removed but again there is a risk of recurrence, albeit lower than that of the non-surgical option.

What are the benefits of surgery?

The benefit of this type of surgery is that it attempts to rid you of the lump and the associated pain that is caused.

Are there any risks?

Unfortunately all operations carry a small risk of complications. In foot surgery at this clinic occurrences are uncommon and are mostly resolved without permanent disability or pain. If you have any concerns about
the examples of complications given here, please discuss them with your specialist before deciding to have surgery:

- Intolerance to the medication given for post-operative pain
- Prolonged swelling post-operatively
- Thick or sensitive scar formation
- Haematoma – bleeding into the cavity left by removing the soft tissue lump
- Recurrence of the lump or bump
- Infection of soft tissues and/or bone
- Blood clot in the leg – a deep vein thrombosis
- Chronic pain or so called ‘complex regional pain syndrome’

**Is this a day procedure?**

Yes, you can usually go home the same day (you will usually be admitted for half a day).

**How long will I need off work?**

This can vary between two weeks and eight. The exact time will depend on the site of the operation and on the type of work you do and the footwear in which you are allowed to return.

**Who can I speak to if I would like more information about the procedure?**

It is important that you understand what the procedure involves before giving consent. This includes any potential risks, benefits and alternatives. Although these will be explained to you beforehand please don't hesitate to ask either your consultant or one of the team if you have any further questions.
The operation

The operation is performed under local anaesthetic, usually injected around the ankle. Most patients find this to be more comfortable than a dental injection. You can eat normally until the time of your operation.

The operation may take about 30 minutes but you should be prepared to be at the hospital longer than this to allow for preparation and recovery time too.

You will have a large bandage, special shoe and possibly crutches to take home with you depending where on the foot the operation is needed.

First 2 - 3 days

- You must rest with your foot above hip level. You will have been given advice on how to keep the foot as comfortable as possible and exercises to keep the blood circulating, whilst you rest.
- You should restrict your walking to going to the bathroom only, and if you have been given crutches you must use them in the way shown.
- The pain is worst for the first 2 days but you will be given some pain killing tablets to help you through this. After 2 - 3 days things should begin to improve.

One week after surgery

- One week after the operation you must attend the clinic for a re-dressing. The wound will be examined and re-dressed.
- Your X-ray (if required) will be examined before you are given advice on gently increasing activities over the following week.
Two or three weeks after surgery

- Two weeks after the operation you must attend the clinic for a re-dressing. The skin should be healing well by this time and any non-dissolvable stitches will be taken out. This will be done at 3 weeks for any stitches under the sole of the foot.
- Once the stitches have been taken out you should no longer need a bandage and will be able to wear a normal shoe again. This shoe does need to be roomy (ideally a trainer) because your foot may be quite swollen.
- At this stage you will be expected to go without your crutches and increase your activities gently. You will still need to rest well between your activities.

Between 2 - 8 weeks after surgery

- During this time the foot returns more to normal and you may be able to vary your footwear a little.
- You may also return to work during this time. The exact time of this will depend on the site of the operation and on the type of work you do and the footwear in which you are allowed to return.
- Depending on comfort, you may be able to drive again. Care must be taken with right foot surgery because of braking.
- Though normal everyday activities will be possible, sporting activities are still likely to be restricted at this stage.

Between 8 - 12 weeks after surgery

- The foot should now be comfortable and returning to normal but there may still be some slight swelling.
Six months after surgery

- You must return for a final review of your progress. At this appointment it is anticipated you will be fit enough to be discharged from the service.
- The remaining swelling should now be very slight, if not completely resolved, and you should be getting full benefit from the surgery.

Twelve months after the surgery

- The foot has stopped improving by this time, all healing is complete.

Who do I contact if I would like any further information?

If you have any questions about the procedure or would like further information please call us on:

- 0114 271 4668