

Programme Title: Clinical Policies

Clinical Policies aim to prevent avoidable harm to patients by only offering treatments on the NHS that are evidence-based, clinically safe and effective, as well as cost effective and a good use of resources.

Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire

Title of policy and version:	Orthopaedics - Ganglion Excision – Hand/Wrist Version: v1.0
Commissioning position:	Criteria Based Access
Scope:	<p>Covers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The excision of ganglion cysts of the hand and wrist, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wrist ganglia ○ Seed (palmar) ganglia ○ Mucous cysts • Applies to primary and recurrent ganglia <p>Out of scope:</p> <p>Procedures undertaken for cosmetic purposes</p>
Cohort:	Patients with symptomatic ganglion cysts of the hand or wrist, including mucous cysts at the distal interphalangeal joint.
Other relevant Clinical Policy	TBC

Treatments routinely funded:	<p><u>Wrist ganglia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No treatment is necessary unless the ganglion is causing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pain Or ○ Tingling/numbness Or ○ Concern that it may represent malignancy • Aspiration may be offered where the ganglion is causing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pain Or ○ Tingling/numbness
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	<p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concern that it may represent malignancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical excision should only be considered where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aspiration has failed to resolve the pain or tingling/numbness <p style="text-align: center;">And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ there are persistent symptoms with restricted hand function • Persistent symptoms should include one or more of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant pain requiring regular analgesia <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ severe functional impairment affecting activities of daily living <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ significant skin breakdown <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tingling/numbness <p><u>Seed (palmar) ganglia</u></p> <p>Surgical excision is routinely funded only where all of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ganglion is painful <p style="text-align: center;">And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puncture/aspiration using a hypodermic needle has been attempted <p style="text-align: center;">And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ganglion persists or recurs after puncture/aspiration <p><u>Mucous cysts</u></p> <p>Surgical excision is routinely funded only where one or more of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent spontaneous discharge of fluid <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant nail deformity
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Treatments not funded:	Ganglion excision undertaken for cosmetic reasons.
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Rationale:

Ganglion cysts are benign and many resolve without intervention. Aspiration or puncture may relieve symptoms, but recurrence is common, and surgical excision carries risks including scarring, complications and recurrence. NHS commissioning is focused on interventions that treat disease or restore function; excision is therefore restricted to patients with persistent symptoms and functional impact after appropriate conservative management.

IFR Statement Clinical Exceptionality:

Where a patient does not meet the policy criteria or the intervention is not normally funded by the NHS, an application for clinical exceptionality can be considered via the ICB's Individual Funding Request (IFR) Policy and Process.

Coding list:

OPCS-4: T591, T592, T598, T599, T601, T602, T608, T609

ICD-10: M67.4

Policy document record:	Orthopaedics - Ganglion Excision – Hand/Wrist Version: v1.0
Ratification date:	1 st April 2026
Record of significant change:	v1.0 – New harmonised policy for Central East ICB, based on predecessor ICB policies (C&P, HWE, BLMK)
Planned review date:	TBC

Document Environmental Impact statement:

Neutral environmental impact. Policy to be shared and stored electronically where possible; if printed, use double-sided printing and minimal copies.