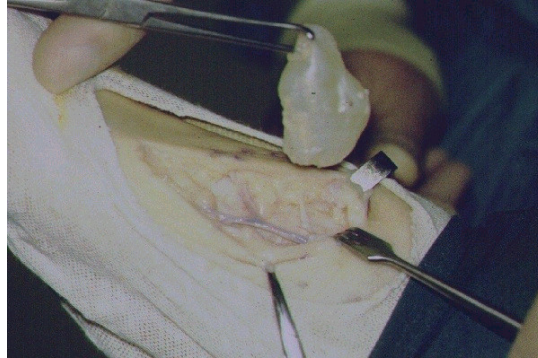




The Foot Surgery Centre – Total Foot Care Solutions

## **The Management of Soft Tissue Lesions**



### What is a Soft Tissue Lesion?

You have been diagnosed with a Soft Tissue Lesion, a lump or bump somewhere on your foot. The most common soft tissue lesions found on the foot are discussed below:

**A Ganglion** - These are a relatively common cause of foot discomfort most commonly occurring on the top of the tarsal joints (the midfoot). They arise from a weakness (ballooning out) of the joint capsule or tendon sheath. Excision is the only successful management. Identification and repair of the weakness causing the ganglion is performed during excision. Where possible, the ganglion is excised whole.

**A Bursa** - These are also relatively common but come from superficial tissue and occur over joints, or a bony prominence, where pressure and friction causes chronic irritation. The treatment for a bursa is the same as for a ganglion but in addition, any deformity or prominence which is causing the bursa may need to be reduced.

**An Inclusion Cyst** - These are caused by a foreign body (such a splinter or hair), getting under the skin and causing a reaction. They can become very hard and sore and often have to be excised.

Common symptoms include, pain associated with pressure from footwear, difficulty wearing shoes. If associated with a retained foreign body, you may experience

swelling and discharge from the area. Some patients have no associated symptoms but are concerned with the appearance or increasing size of the lump.

#### How is the diagnosis made?

A diagnosis is made by examining the foot and correlating the findings with your clinical symptoms and history of any injury. If the diagnosis is unclear an ultrasound scan or MRI scan is sometimes requested. This may also be used to determine the size/extent of the lump and whether any blood vessels or nerves are nearby.

#### What are the treatment options?

##### Non-surgical treatment

- 1) No treatment
- 2) Deflective Padding
- 3) A cortisone injection into the lesion is appropriate in some cases, but is not a permanent cure

##### Surgical treatment

If non-surgical treatment is unsuccessful, or there is concern over the type of soft tissue lesion involved, an operation can be performed to remove the lump or bump. This is carried out in the Day Surgery Unit under local anaesthetic. The incision will be made over the lump and will be curved, zigzag or S-shaped to enable good visualisation of the entire lump and reduce the likelihood of the scar contracting after surgery. Once the lump has been removed, it will be routinely sent to the pathologist for identification. An absorbable suture is used to close the skin. The length of the operation varies depending on the size of the lump but is usually about 30 minutes.

If the lump is on the sole of your foot, you will be non-weightbearing after the operation using crutches. Incisions on the bottom of the foot take one week longer to heal (i.e. three weeks) and may burst open if you walk too soon.

#### How long would this restrict my activities?

Two to three weeks after surgery, the suture tags are cut and you can bathe again. Returning to a pair of lace up shoe at this stage helps reduce swelling. You can drive and participate in sports when you are back in footwear. It is normal for people to have two to three weeks off work for this type of operation.

#### Are there any complications associated with the operation?

Specific complications associated with removal of soft tissue lesions include:

- Scarring.
- Recurrence of symptoms due to re-growth of the lump.
- Sensory loss.

- Malignant tumours are extremely rare in the feet. However, on the rare occasion that cancer is identified, further surgery may be required and more specialist care from an oncologist (cancer specialist) will be suggested.

General Complications of foot surgery include:

- Prolonged swelling
- Continued pain
- Infection
- Blood clot
- Delayed healing
- A chronic pain syndrome

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