

What is a myxoid cyst?

A myxoid cyst, or digital mucous cyst, is a small, non-cancerous bump most often found near a joint at the end of your finger. They are often related to osteoarthritis. Myxoid cysts usually don't require treatment.

What does a myxoid cyst look and feel like?

Myxoid cysts are **most common near the nail on the index, middle or ring finger of your preferred (dominant) hand**. They are not as common on the toes. You will usually only have one cyst, but you may develop more.

Myxoid cysts have a **smooth, shiny surface. They are usually skin-coloured and look almost translucent (light can shine through)**. They range in size from 5 mm to 1 cm across, which is about the size of a pencil eraser. The bumps are filled with a **jelly-like, sticky fluid that may ooze from the cyst**, and can sometimes be blood-stained. They typically don't cause any pain; however, you may experience arthritis pain and stiffness in the nearby joint.

Rarely, a myxoid cyst **may grow under your nail** or involve the root of the nail. This type of cyst can be painful. It can cause a groove to develop down the length of your nail. You may also see slight depressions or colour changes. Your nail may split, or you may lose your nail.

What causes myxoid cysts?

The exact cause is unknown. Digital myxoid cysts occur most frequently in people in their sixties but may develop at any age. **Individuals with osteoarthritis and women and are more at risk**, and in some cases there might be history of trauma to the affected finger or toe.

Things you can do to help yourself

Most myxoid cysts don't need treatment. Firmly pressing on the cyst repeatedly for several weeks may help reduce the size of the cyst in some cases. You shouldn't try to drain or puncture the cyst yourself as this can cause an infection.

Make an appointment at your GP surgery

You should only see a health professional if the cyst is causing pain, affecting your quality of life, or becomes infected (red, warm to touch and tender).

Referral to a specialist

There is no reliably effective medical treatment for a myxoid cyst, so if a referral is needed you should ask to be referred to a doctor who specialises in hand surgery as both the cyst and stalk that attaches to the joint will need to be removed.

What will happen when you are referred?

The specialist will discuss whether or not **surgery** is appropriate - even though surgical removal is the best option, **some cysts will recur**.

Other treatment options, which are less likely to be successful, include - repeated drainage of the cyst using a sterile needle, injection with steroid or a chemical that shrinks the cyst, and a freezing method known as cryosurgery.

Helping with other skin conditions

If you, a family member, or friend have an undiagnosed skin condition; or you want to learn more about how to treat skin conditions, please visit www.pcds.org.uk – if you click the purple tile near the top of the homepage that reads '**Take a Tour of the PCDS Website**' you can learn how best to use this website.