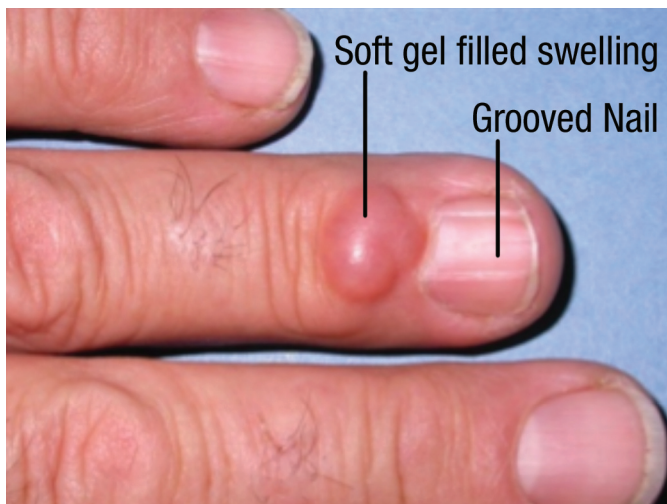




CONDITION

What is a Mucous Cyst?

These are swellings that appear near the end joint of a finger, near the nail. They are a type of ganglion.



A mucous cyst

Why do they appear?

No one really knows why these swellings appear in some people and not others but they are known to be more frequent in patients with arthritis in the end joint of the finger.

What problems do mucous cysts cause?

These swellings can be a nuisance. They can swell and burst and can become infected and painful. They can cause deformity of the adjacent nail (as in the picture).

Are other investigations required?

Xrays are useful to look for associated arthritis in the joint.

What treatment is available for mucous cysts?

As with ganglions elsewhere these cysts can be reabsorbed by the body and spontaneously resolve over time.

Although it might appear tempting to puncture the cyst yourself at home there is a risk of infection if you do this.

For persistent cysts surgical excision can be considered. This should be done by an experienced hand surgeon in an operating theatre. The operation can usually be done under local anaesthetic. Care is required to protect the delicate tissues in the area whilst still completely excising the cyst from the joint. The underlying joint may remain uncomfortable after this operation as the arthritis will remain. There is a very small chance (less than 5%) of the cyst returning after surgery. The operation can usually be done under local anaesthetic.