



Digital Mucous/Mucinous Cyst

What is a Mucous/Mucinous Cyst?

A mucous cyst is just an out pouching of the last joint of the finger (or the distal interphalangeal joint). It most often occurs in conjunction with arthritis. It can cause joint swelling and pain.



It also may cause nailbed deformity. The cyst can get infected if the skin becomes thin and breaks open. In addition, if there is a groove or ridge in the nail, bacteria can get underneath it and cause an infection as well.

Who gets mucous cysts?

Those that get mucous cysts are those that have arthritis of the hand. They most commonly occur in women over the age of 45. Women get far more hand arthritis than men. It is often hereditary.

What is the treatment for a mucous cyst?

The treatment is usually surgical. The procedure can be done under local anesthesia. Often a flap of adjacent skin is rotated over the area of bad skin. Surgical success requires that half of the joint be exposed and arthritic spurs removed. The cysts can recur. If they do and pain is present, sometimes fusion of the last joint of the finger is required.

After surgery, we will send patients to the hand therapist one time. They should not bend the end of the finger postoperatively as this will cause the stress on the wound. The therapist can make a splint holding the end of the finger still until the skin is healed. (2-3 weeks).

