

Ingrown Toenails

An Ingrown Toenail occurs when the nail grows sideways into the skin alongside the nail. This can cause pain, especially when wearing tight shoes. It can also lead to an infection with redness and swelling.

The side of the nail will need to be removed in order to stop the pain and release any infection present. If there is a lot of redness and swelling, then an antibiotic may also be used. The redness and pain should begin to go away within 48 hours. It will take about 2 weeks for the exposed nail bed to become dry and all of the swelling to go down.

If only the side of the nail was removed it will begin to grow back in a few months. To prevent recurrence, that side of nail bed may be treated with a strong chemical to prevent the nail from regrowing ("ablation").

HOME CARE:

- 1) Twice a day for the first three days, clean and soak the toe as follows:
 - Soak your foot in a tub of warm water for five minutes. Or, hold your toe under a faucet of warm running water for five minutes.
 - Clean any remaining crust away with soap and water using a cotton-tipped applicator (Q-tip).
 - Apply Bacitracin, Polysporin or other antibiotic ointment to the infected area.
 - Cover with a bandage or Band-Aid until the exposed nail bed is dry and there is no more drainage.
- 2) Change the dressing daily or whenever it becomes wet or dirty.
- 3) If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed until they are all gone.
- 4) Wear comfortable shoes with a lot of toe room, or open-toe sandals, while your toe is healing.
- 5) You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) to control pain, unless another medicine was prescribed. [**NOTE** : If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.]

PREVENTION:

- 1) Wear shoes that fit well. Avoid shoes that pinch the toes together.
- 2) When you trim your toenails, do not cut them too short. Cut straight across at the top and do not round the edges.
- 3) Do not use a sharp object to clean under your nail since this might cause an infection.

4) At first signs of a recurrence, insert a small piece of cotton under that side of the nail to help it grow out straight.

FOLLOW UP with your doctor or this facility as advised by our staff. If the ingrown toenail recurs, follow up with a podiatrist for nail bed ablation.

GET PROMPT MEDICAL ATTENTION if any of the following occur:

- Increasing redness, pain or swelling of the toe
- Red streaks in the skin leading away from the wound
- Continued pus or fluid drainage for more than 24 hours
- Fever over 100.0° F (37.8° C)