

# THE FOOT & GAIT CLINIC

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

# NAIL SURGERY

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A SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND QUICK SOLUTION TO  
INGROWN TOENAILS



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# *What is an* **INGROWN TOENAIL?**



An ingrown toenail develops when the sides of the toenail grow into the surrounding skin, which becomes red, swollen and tender.

A big toe is often affected and can occur on one or both sides, other symptoms may include:

- Pain with pressure on the toe.
- Inflammation to the skin around the nail.
- A build up of fluid in the surrounding skin.
- An overgrowth of skin around the side of the nail.
- Bleeding.
- Leaking of fluid (exudate) from around the nail.
- Infection, sometimes with pus, which may be coloured and foul smelling.

As the condition becomes more persistent, there can be chronic infection and the formation of excess skin called hypergranulation tissue.

The condition can result from a variety of factors. An ingrown toenail may develop from improper nail trimming, wearing tight socks or shoes, or nail damage. It is also common in individuals with irregularly shaped nails. The pressure on the nail in such cases causes it to curve, leading to it embedding into the skin.

# HOW ARE INGROWN TOENAILS *Treated?*

Podiatrists are best placed to treat your ingrowing toenail. Podiatrists routinely carry out conservative and surgical treatment of ingrown toenails. Our team of expert Podiatrists have carried out hundreds of successful nail surgeries.

Nail surgery is considered a low risk procedure which involves partial or total nail removal. Following a complete assessment if you are suitable for this procedure you can be booked in for the surgery. If you are in poor health, on certain medication, pregnant (in first trimester) or you have had a previous reaction to local anaesthetic, you will be referred back to your GP. A friend or relative is welcome to sit with you during the nail surgery.

## PREVENTATIVE CARE

- Keep your feet clean by washing them regularly with soap and water.
- Change your socks regularly.
- Cut your toenails straight across to stop them digging into the surrounding skin.
- Wear comfortable shoes that fit properly.
- Gently push the skin away from the nail using a cotton bud (this may be easier after using a small amount of olive oil to soften the skin).
- Regular visits to your podiatrist for conservative treatment

# BENEFITS

# *And* COMPLICATIONS

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## The Benefits of Nail Surgery with the application of Phenol.

- It removes the deformed nail which is causing pain and / or infection.
- If you have swelling with your nail problem it reduces swelling.
- If phenol is applied it prevents nail regrowth in 80% or more of patients.
- It's a simple procedure requiring little specialist equipment.
- If you have an infected toe and on antibiotics the procedure can still be carried out.
- Post procedure there is minimal discomfort and pain as Phenol provides some pain relief.
- Phenol has antibacterial and anti fungal qualities which may reduce the risk of infection.



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## Possible Risks with Nail Surgery

- Although Phenol may reduce the risk of infection it can still happen at any time whilst healing.
- Delayed healing due to Phenol application (6 to 12 weeks) longer if infection occurs.
- Post procedure bleeding for 24 to 48 hours.
- Post procedure discomfort / pain but is rare.
- Possible nail growth some months after healing.
- Reaction (anaphylaxis) to local anaesthetic. Although rare is a very serious clinical emergency requiring immediate hospital attendance.

# *The* PROCEDURE



## 1 Numbing

Local anaesthetic is injected into each side of the toe. This is the most uncomfortable part of the procedure but the toe goes numb within a few minutes.



## 2 Nail Removal

Once the toe is numb a tight tourniquet is placed around the toe and either partial or total nail removal is performed without the need for cutting of the skin or stitches.



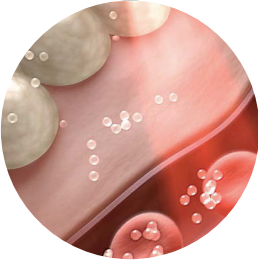
## 3 Phenolisation

A chemical Phenol (Carbolic Acid) is then applied to destroy the base of the nail to prevent either a portion or all the nail from regrowing.

## 4 Finishing Off

Finally the tight tourniquet is removed and a dressing applied to the wound. The dressing keeps the wound clean and must be kept on and dry until you return for the first dressing (1 to 3 days later). The whole procedure takes about an hour.

# *Benefits Of* LASER THERAPY



The K-Laser software is designed to adjust the power and wavelengths of the laser to transform it into a low-level laser therapy (LLLT) device for therapeutic use. It can also be operated at ultra-low power when appropriate.



The vasodilation effect of Laser light therapy also known as LLLT (Low Level Laser Therapy) helps with tissue oxygenation. It is a great additional tool to improve wound healing.



Laser treatment is included in your Nail Surgery Package.

## What happens next?

- Rest with your feet elevated for the rest of the day. This will reduce the risk of bleeding and any discomfort / pain when the anaesthetic wears off in 2 to 3 hours.
- If you do experience discomfort or pain, take what you would normally take for a headache. Avoid Aspirin as this will encourage bleeding, unless it is part of your normal prescription.
- Avoid alcohol for the rest of the day as this may encourage bleeding.
- Avoid tight fitting shoes and hosiery.
- If you notice any blood coming through the dressing do not remove it. Just place another dressing over the top and hold in place with the tape provided. Rest with your feet up.
- Contact sport and swimming should be avoided in the short term. Discuss this with your podiatrist.

Take paracetamol on return home to ease recovery from anaesthetic and if not within 6 hours then take another dose prior to going to bed.

Do not remove the dressing and keep it dry until your first dressing appointment

Following your first dressing appointment you will need to redress your toe/s daily.

- You were given a redressing pack on the day of your procedure containing Mepore dressings.
- You can dress your toes anytime of the day that suits you. Remove your dressing and soak the toe/s in warm salt water for 10 to 15 mins. The salt water is made by diluting 2-3 handfuls of salt in just enough warm water to immerse the foot. Dry well and leave open to the air for 30 minutes and then apply a clean dressing as shown in clinic.
- As the wound improves with time continue to redress daily but only soak the toe/s if debris is present. Your podiatrist will advise on any follow up appointments.

# THE FOOT AND GAIT CLINIC

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*Let's get in touch*

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