

Ingrown Toenail

Body Part

Toenail

Condition:

Ingrown toenails are a common pathology, also known as onychocryptosis. Ingrown nails occur when a part of your toenail (predominantly the big toe) causes pressure and pain on the outside borders of the nail, often piercing the skin and becoming infected.

Summary

Causes of ingrown toenail vary. They can be:

- Hereditary
 - I.e. that's your normal shape of nail for you thanks to your ancestors
- Trauma
 - You may have dropped something on your nail causing it to split
- Fungal toenail infections
 - These infections can cause nails to grow abnormally and occasionally cause ingrown nails.
- Poor management
 - Improper nail cutting technique can cause ingrown nails.
- Ill fitting hosiery or footwear
 - Socks or shoes that are too tight can place pressure on your toenails causing the nail to grow into the flesh. ,

Symptoms:

- Pain on the outside edge of the nail
 - Especially when pressure is applied, namely in bed with the sheets on it or in shoes.
- Swelling
- Infection
 - Redness, puss, odour, pain
- Hypergranulation tissue
 - If its chronically ingrown you may see a flap of skin forming over the nail

Although painful ingrown nails are generally not detrimental to your health, unless you have a chronic disease such as Diabetes, Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD) etc. In which case if the skin does become pierced by the nail it eventuate into an ulcer.

Treatment:

Seeing your podiatrist is the best thing you can do if you suspect you have an ingrown toenail. Trying to fix the nail at home usually makes the situation worse and can be a lot more painful. If the condition doesn't seem complex and the patient is only in mild discomfort, treatment would involve

- Carefully cutting and rounding the nail to remove the spike.

If the ingrown nail is reoccurring it may need non invasive surgery performed by your Podiatrist at Gen Health. The procedure takes anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour and has a success rate of 98%. The procedure involves:

- Prepping the skin
- Injecting local anaesthetic
- Lifting the problematic nail from the nail bed
- Cutting the nail back
- Applying Phenol to stop that small part of the nail ever growing back
- Dressing the nail

(Note: if you suspect your toe is infected, cleaning it daily with salty water and cotton bud is recommended prior to seeing the Podiatrist)

Prognosis:

Ingrown nails do not get better unless treated. They don't just go away. Conservative treatment will initially be attempted - to manipulate the nail to grow out over approximately 3 treatments. If no lasting improvement occurs; then surgery is indicated in which case you'll be back at work within 72 hours post op.



Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link: <https://www.healthline.com/health/ingrown-toenail#prevention>