

WHAT IS AN INGROWN TOENAIL?

An Ingrown Toenail is a very common foot ailment that is encountered daily in podiatry practice. When a toenail grows incorrectly it often irritates the adjacent skin or flesh of the toe, which results in discomfort. Patients usually present with moderate pain in the affected toe, however, infection and severe pain can rapidly develop if not treated correctly.



WHAT CAUSES AN INGROWN TOENAIL?

Ingrown toenails can develop at common causes include:

- Cutting toenails too short
- Cutting down the sides of a toenail
- Toe deformities (eg. Bunions or claw toes)
- Abnormal nail shape (eg. Involuting nails)
- Trauma (kicking sports etc)
- Poorly fitting footwear
- Sweaty feet that leads to fragile/ soft skin.



WHY CUTTING THE "V" DOESN'T WORK

Like hair, toenails are made from protein and grow from special cells at the base of the toe. They are not living themselves and therefore shaping the front edge of the nail will not in itself change the way it grows. However, cutting a "V" will make the nail weak and can take pressure from the sides of the nail in some instances. Unfortunately, this rarely results in long-term improvement of the problem and can make the nail fragile and susceptible to breaking and chipping.



SUBIACO
FOOT
& ANKLE

TREATMENT

Our Podiatrists are well trained in the latest conservative measures and surgical techniques to treat ingrown toenails and can offer a range of options.

CONSERVATIVE

Conservative treatment may include a combination of:

- Correct nail trimming
- Skilful removal of sharp nail edges/corners
- Application of topical antiseptics and follow-up dressing advice
- Splints or aids to correct toe deformities
- Advice or provision of appropriate footwear
- Treatment for excessive foot perspiration

SURGICAL

Surgical Partial Nail Avulsion (PNA) with phenol matrixectomy remains the definitive treatment for ingrown toenails that do not respond or are unlikely to respond to conservative measures. This innovative procedure is skilfully performed under Local Anaesthetic in our rooms and generally takes less than one hour.

Advantages of this modern procedure are:

- Permanent correction of the problem
- Pain free during the procedure
- Minimal or nil post-operative pain
- No sutures (stitches) are required
- No need for a general anaesthetic
- Fast healing
- Cost effective

BASIC STEPS TO TOENAIL SURGERY ARE:

1. Informed consent is attained
2. Local anaesthetic is administered so the procedure is pain free
3. In a sterile environment, the offending nail section is removed and the nail matrix/root is removed using a chemical technique. This prevents the section of the nail removed from regrowing
4. A thick and absorbent dressing is applied and the anaesthetic will be effective for long enough for the patient to get home comfortably and settled.
5. The patient will generally be required to attend dressing changes at 2 day and 1 week, and sometimes 1 month later
6. Post-operative advice will be provided
7. Healing time is rapid, with full recovery usually within 3-6 weeks. Generally patients are advised to wear open toed footwear for a day or so afterwards, and that activities where the toe may be traumatised (eg. Sports) should be avoided.

HOW CAN I SPEAK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT THIS?

Regardless of how bad your ingrown toenail is, we always request patients book in for an initial appointment to assess the nail/s and determine a treatment plan. At this appointment we may perform conservative treatment, prescribe antibiotics and/or book you in for a PNA.

Please feel welcome to:

Book online at www.subiacofootankle.com.au

Call us on (08) 6245 3187

Email us at contact@subiacofootankle.com.au