

Patient Fact Sheet

Ingrown Toe nails



What is an ingrown toenail?

Here the side of the toenail, usually the big toe nail, becomes embedded into the skin as the nail continues to grow. This causes the skin to be cut, weep and bleed. It also allows infection to enter and spread. Hyper granulation of skin or the overgrowth of skin can also occur at the site of the ingrown nail.

What causes them?

The single biggest cause of ingrown nails is bad toenail cutting. Wearing of tight footwear and trauma or damage to the nail are both also causes of ingrown toenails. Teenage boys are more prone to this condition mainly because they “pick” their nails rather than cut them.

To avoid this condition it is advised that you cut your toenails straight across and wear footwear that give the toes sufficient room.

How is it treated?

The spike of nail can easily be removed by your chiropodist. The nail may also require thinning down especially after trauma. If there is any infection present your chiropodist may advise a course of antibiotics from your doctor first.

In some cases of persistent ingrown nails your chiropodist may apply a nail brace to try and correct any deformity in the growth pattern. As a last resort it may be recommended that a full or partial nail removal may be necessary.