

Ingrown Nails

A condition whereby the nail grows into the skin of the toe instead of over it.

What to look for

- Pain, swelling, and redness around a toenail, usually the big toe.

Ingrown nails usually affect the toenails and can be very painful.

People who have curved or thick nails are most susceptible, although anyone can suffer from ingrown nails as a result of an injury or because of shoes which do not fit properly.

Diabetics need to be aggressive in treating and preventing minor foot ailments because they can develop into serious medical problems.

Causes

Ingrown nails are most frequently caused by cutting your toenails too short or rounding the nail edges, or by wearing ill-fitting shoes that press the nail into your toe. You can also develop an ingrown nail after an injury such as stubbing your toe.

Traditional Treatment

This can be prevented by wearing shoes that fit well, and by taking proper care when you cut your toenails. Care must be taken to ensure the area does not become infected.

If this does occur, you will probably be put on a course of antibiotics and be given an ointment to help the infection.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Herbal Therapies – Medical herbalists may suggest soaking the toe in a warm solution of [calendula](#) (*Calendula officinalis*) and [tea tree oil](#).

Personal Care

- When you cut your nails, put a small ‘V’ in the middle with the scissors. This will allow the nail to grow in towards the middle and not spade out to cause trouble.
- soaking your foot in warm salt water and then applying an over-the-counter topical solution for ingrown nails
- Lemon is said to act as a natural softening agent. If you want to try a natural remedy, tie a fresh lemon slice around the toe and leave it on overnight.

Prevention

Proper grooming is the first step in preventing ingrown nails.

Soak the feet first to soften the nails. Do not cut the nails with a downwards slope at the sides as this can cause the problem.

Call Your Doctor If:

- The ingrown nail becomes infected