

# Ingrown Toenails



## Why do you get ingrown toenails?

When a toenail is ingrown, the sides of the corners dig into the skin causing pain, swelling and redness.

A number of reasons can cause the nail to grow into the skin:

- Improper nail trimming
- Excessive sweating
- Tight fitting shoes
- Injury to the toenail

## Treatment

A podiatrist is trained to gently remove the pieces of nail that are causing your ingrown toenail. Sometimes, this is all that's needed. However, you may be referred to your GP if antibiotics are needed and if the nail shape is deformed or infection is recurrent, a simple procedure called a partial nail avulsion can be done to permanently remove the side of the nail that irritates.

## The Procedure

The procedure only takes about 10 minutes per toe. We begin by preparing the toe with an anti-bacterial solution then numb it using local anaesthetic. The offending part of the nail is removed and a special solution is applied to stop nail regrowth. Lastly we dress the area and give you wound care instructions.

## What can you expect after the procedure?

- You will need to sit with your foot raised for the next 24-48 hours to prevent bleeding.
- Pain and discomfort may be - but not usually - experienced over the next 2-3 days.
- It may take up to 2 months before the area has completely healed.
- In 70% of cases the nail does not grow back.

## Surgical Risks

With every surgical procedure, there are risks involved. You may experience one or more of the following:

### Infection

Despite all precautions taken, infection can sometimes still occur. It is up to you to let the podiatrist know of any signs or symptoms of infection. These will be explained at the time of the procedure.

### Delayed healing

Sometimes healing of the wound may be compromised due to a number of reasons. This may include age, systemic complications (e.g. heart or kidney conditions, diabetes, etc), inadequate wound care, dehydration, alcohol consumption, vitamin deficiency and some medications.

### Numbness of the toe

The injection may sometimes affect a nerve, which can temporarily result in numbness of the toe for up to 12 months.

### Chemical reaction

Please advise us if you have any known allergies prior to the procedure. In rare circumstances, a reaction to the chemicals used throughout the procedure may result which requires immediate attention.

### The nail may grow back

Three in ten cases result in nail re-growth. This varies depending on the nature of the nail and surrounding tissue.

## Challenges following the PNA

We wish that dealing with the human body were like buying a new car. However this simply does not happen because everyone is different in shape, size, age, etc. We find that people will vary in the way they react to injections, the nail procedure and how the body heals itself.

Sometimes we find the nail may not heal the way it does with most people and scar tissue may form beside the nail. In some circumstances the nail may begin to re-grow differently with ridges or thickening of the nail may occur after the wound has healed.

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If you have any questions regarding any of the above information please feel free to contact Rachael at Pod Co Podiatry

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