



Ingrown Toenail

Patient Information

WHAT IS AN INGROWN TOENAIL?

An Ingrown Toenail occurs when the edge or corner of a toenail grows into or pierces the surrounding skin. This can cause pain, redness, swelling, and in some cases, infection. While any toe can be affected, the big toe is most commonly involved.

COMMON CAUSES

- **Improper nail trimming** (cutting nails too short or rounded at the edges)
- **Tight or ill-fitting footwear**
- **Toe injuries** (e.g. stubbing or repeated pressure from sports)
- **Inherited nail shape** (naturally curved nails)
- **Poor foot hygiene**
- **Repetitive activities** (running, dancing, football)

SYMPTOMS

- Tenderness or pain along one or both sides of the nail
- Redness and swelling
- Warmth around the area
- Possible pus or drainage if infection develops
- Difficulty wearing shoes or walking comfortably

TREATMENT

- **At-home care** (for mild cases):
 - Soaking the foot in warm, salty water
 - Gently lifting the nail edge with a clean cotton or dental floss
 - Applying antiseptic and keeping the toe clean and dry
- **Medical treatment:**
 - If infected or persistent, a Foot Health Professional may remove part of the nail
 - In recurrent cases, the nail root may be treated to prevent regrowth on the affected side (e.g. phenolisation)
 - Antibiotics may be prescribed if infection is present

PREVENTION

- Cut nails straight across — not too short or rounded
- Wear shoes with adequate toe room