

Ingrowing toenail (children)

The purpose of this information sheet is to explain about an ingrowing toenail, the treatment and management of this.

What is an ingrowing toenail?

An ingrowing toenail is where the side or corner of the nail grows down and digs into the skin fold beside the nail. This leads to the skin becoming red, hot, tender and swollen. The big toe is most likely to be affected. If left untreated the inflammation can spread to the rest of the toe and the area becomes infected and may ooze pus.

Before the operation

Removal of an ingrowing toenail can be undertaken as a day case procedure using either a local or a general anaesthetic.

The removal of only the edge of the nail or removal of the whole nail depends upon how ingrown it is, whether one or both sides are affected and whether there is evidence of infection. Your doctor will discuss with you and your child the most appropriate treatment and the use of either a local or general anaesthetic.

Local anaesthesia

Using local anaesthesia, your child will be awake during the operation. "Magic" cream is placed around the base of the affected toe prior to the procedure. This numbs the skin in preparation for the local anaesthetic drug which is then injected into the skin at the time of the operation. This causes the toe to become completely numb, although some sensation of pressure may be present. There should be no pain. Your child will be supported and reassured throughout the procedure.

General anaesthesia

Using general anaesthesia, your child is unconscious (asleep) during the operation. For more information, if you have not already been given a copy, please ask a member of staff for the information leaflet 'Anaesthetic Advice (children)'.

After the operation

Pain

The toe will be numb for between 6 to 24 hours. Your child may be uncomfortable for a few days

after the operation. We advise that they take paracetamol and ibuprofen regularly for 3-4 days.

Eating and drinking

If your child is awake during the procedure they will be able to eat and drink immediately on return from theatre. If your child had a general anaesthetic, they will be able to drink on return from the recovery room and eat as soon as they feel well enough to do so.

Getting around

Your child will be provided with an open toe sandal upon discharge which they should wear without socks when possible. For the first 24 to 48 hours your child should rest with their foot elevated (up) to help reduce swelling and pain. Until the toe is healed your child should continue to keep the foot elevated when sitting down and, if possible, resting on a pillow at night.

Activities

Your child should be off school for up to a week. When they return, they should not do any sports or rough games for at least 4-6 weeks, unless otherwise instructed.

Bathing

Your child may bathe as normal, but you need to keep the dressing and bandage dry. At the dressing change you will be given further information regarding when the toe can get wet.

Dressing change

An appointment for the dressing change will be arranged before your child is discharged from hospital.

Possible complications

Infection

If your child develops a persistent high temperature, contact your GP.

Bleeding

A small amount of bleeding through the bandage is common over the first 24 hours. If the bleeding is excessive (soaking through the bandage), either contact your GP or local Emergency Department (A&E).

General information

On average, nail surgery takes between 6 and 12 weeks to heal. Please expect that the new nail will frequently be an odd shape and colour, and won't look the same as your child's other toenails.

Further information

- **NHS Website for England** www.nhs.uk/conditions/ingrown-toenail/

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Bluebell Ward, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284008

Children's Emergency Department, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284333

Urgent Care Centre, New QEII Hospital, Welwyn Garden City:

- Telephone 01707 247549

Leaflet information

**You can request this information in a different format or another language;
please speak to your doctor or nurse.**

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