

Ingrown Toenails

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What are Ingrown Toenails?

An ingrown toenail occurs when the edge or corner of a toenail grows into the surrounding skin. This condition often affects the big toe and can lead to pain, swelling, and sometimes infection.

Causes of Ingrown Toenails

1. **Improper Nail Trimming:**
 - Cutting toenails too short or rounding the edges can encourage the nail to grow into the skin.
2. **Tight Footwear:**
 - Shoes that crowd the toes or apply excessive pressure can contribute to ingrown nails.
3. **Injury:**
 - Trauma to the toe, such as stubbing it, can cause the nail to grow abnormally.
4. **Genetics:**
 - Some individuals are predisposed to developing ingrown toenails due to the natural shape of their nails.
5. **Poor Foot Hygiene:**
 - Not keeping feet clean and dry can increase the risk of ingrown nails.



Symptoms of Ingrown Toenails

1. **Pain:**
 - Tenderness along the edge of the nail, especially when pressure is applied.
2. **Swelling:**
 - Redness and swelling around the affected nail.
3. **Infection:**
 - Pus, warmth, and increased pain if the ingrown nail becomes infected.
4. **Hardening of Skin:**
 - The skin around the nail may thicken or form calluses.

Treatment Options for Ingrown Toenails

Non-Surgical Treatment

1. **Soaking:**
 - Soaking the foot in warm, soapy water several times a day to reduce swelling and relieve pain.
2. **Proper Nail Trimming:**
 - Cutting the nail straight across to prevent it from digging into the skin.
3. **Cotton or Dental Floss:**
 - Placing a small piece of cotton or dental floss under the ingrown edge to help the nail grow above the skin.



4. **Antibiotics:**

- Applying topical antibiotic creams or taking oral antibiotics if an infection is present.

Surgical Treatment

1. **Partial Nail Removal:**

- Removing the ingrown portion of the nail to alleviate pain and prevent recurrence.

2. **Matrixectomy:**

- Removing part or all of the nail matrix (the root) to permanently prevent the ingrown nail from returning.



Prevention of Ingrown Toenails

1. **Trim Nails Properly:**

- Cut nails straight across without rounding the edges.

2. **Wear Comfortable Shoes:**

- Avoid tight, narrow, or high-heeled shoes that press on the toes.

3. **Maintain Good Hygiene:**

- Keep feet clean and dry to reduce the risk of infection.

4. **Avoid Trauma:**

- Protect your toes during physical activities and avoid injuring the nail.

Conclusion

Severe arthritis, toe fractures, and ingrown toenails are common conditions affecting the foot and ankle. Prompt recognition and treatment are essential for managing symptoms and preventing complications. Consult a healthcare professional for a personalized treatment plan if you experience persistent foot pain or nail issues.