

## Ingrown Toenail

### What is an Ingrown Toenail?

An Ingrown Toenail is one that pierces the flesh of the toe. It can often be a splinter of nail digging into the flesh, and can be extremely painful. In more severe cases, it can become infected, producing pus and bleeding. Ingrown toenails most commonly affect the large toenail, but can affect the other toes too. A nail that is curling (involved or convoluted) into the flesh, but isn't actually piercing the skin, isn't a true ingrown toenail, but can also be very painful or inflamed.



### What causes it?

There are many genetic factors that can make you prone to ingrowing toenails, such as your posture (the way you stand), your gait (the way you walk), a foot deformity such as a bunion or excessive pronation (in rolling) of the feet, and inherited problems causing your nails to naturally be wide and fan shaped instead of growing straight, encouraging your nail to grow into the flesh. Tight footwear and socks can also push your toe flesh onto the nail so that it pierces the skin. However, one of the most common causes is cutting your nails incorrectly.

### What will happen if I leave it untreated?

If left untreated, and they become infected, the infection can spread to the rest of the toe and foot. The quicker you treat them, the less painful the treatment.

### What can help?

There are a number of ways that can help relieve the pain of ingrown toenails, including some which you can do yourself at home. The home care techniques are always the best place to start, however it is always recommended to seek advice on the possible treatment options by a Podiatrist.

### What are the treatment options?

Ingrown toenail management can be carried out by your Podiatrist. If your ingrown toenail isn't too severe, it can usually be trimmed by your podiatrist. He or she will lift the edge of your nail and cut away the ingrown section.

If you are beyond self-treatment because an infection has started to set in then you need to book an appointment to see a Podiatrist as soon as possible. Your Podiatrist will be able to remove the sliver of nail which has become ingrown and cut the nail to try to prevent it from becoming ingrown again.

If the toenail is causing extreme pain and the swelling and infection are really bad, the Podiatrist may have to perform surgery on the toe to remedy the situation. This could mean having some or all of the toenail or surrounding skin cut and removed.