

**Patient Information:**

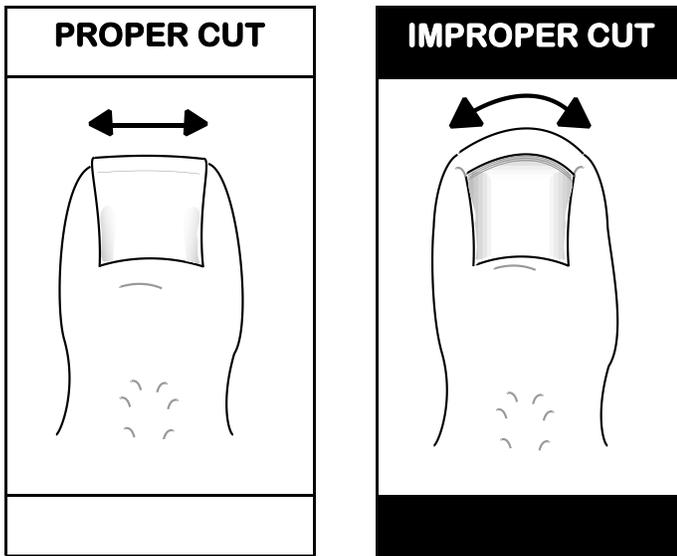
## **Ingrown Toenails**

### ***What is an ingrown toenail?***

An ingrown toenail occurs when the sides or corners of the nail curve downward and dig into the tissues around the nail. This can cause redness, swelling and pain.

### ***How can ingrown toenails be prevented?***

Two major causes for ingrown toenails are tightly fitting shoes and improperly trimmed nails. Shoes should have a wide toe box to allow room for the toes and avoid pressure on the sides of the nail. When cutting nails, avoid peeling or trimming nails down into the corners. Instead allow the nail to grow out from the toe and cut it straight across. Avoid cutting the nail too short.



Trauma, injury or diseases of the nail can also play a factor and should be evaluated by your health care provider.

### ***How should I treat an ingrown toenail?***

There are several conservative measures you can try to help alleviate mild pain and swelling around the nail.

- ◆ First, reduce activities, such as running and other sports.
- ◆ Soaking the nail several times a day for 20-30 minutes in warm water may help reduce the redness and swelling.

- ◆ Placing a small piece of dry cotton under the edge of the nail to raise it up may help it grow out.

If you experience increased pain, swelling, redness, and drainage around the nail you should consult your health care provider. Sometimes an antibiotic may be prescribed to help treat infection and in some cases surgical removal of the nail may be recommended.

### ***What happens if I need to have surgery on the nail?***

After consulting with your health care provider, a time will be set up for you to have the inward growing portion of the nail removed. It's a good idea to bring loose fitting shoes or sandals to wear after the procedure. You will be able to walk after the surgery but should limit activities for the next several days.

The initial step of the surgery involves numbing the toe with an injection of an anesthetic. Your health care provider will then cut the nail along the edge that is growing into the skin and pull out the piece of nail. In some cases, a chemical solution or electrical charge may be applied to the exposed part of the nail bed to keep the portion of nail from growing back.

### ***How should I care for my toenail after surgery?***

A bandage/dressing will be applied and you will be given instructions on how to care for the nail after surgery. Your toe will remain numb for potentially 1-2 hours after the procedure. Elevating the foot can decrease initial throbbing and pain. Over-the-counter pain relievers may be taken as directed to decrease pain. It is recommended you refrain from vigorous physical activity for 1-2 weeks. Continue to wear proper fitting shoes.