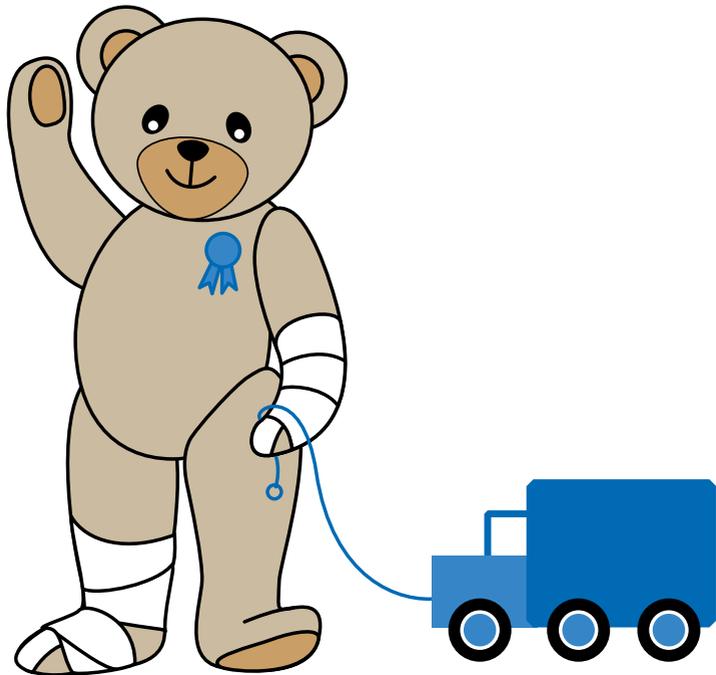


Wedge incision of an ingrowing toenail

Children and young people

Paediatrics Department



Patient information leaflet

What is an ingrowing toenail?

This problem occurs when the toenail grows into the skin at the sides of the toe. This leads to swelling, severe tenderness, and sometimes infection.

What causes it?

Ingrowing toenails often run in families. However, ingrowing toenails may be caused by:

- Incorrect trimming of the nail – the toenail should be cut straight across.
- Poor fitting footwear – this can make the problem worse.
- Injury.

What does surgery involve?

The toenail and the skin surrounding it are numbed with a local or general anaesthetic, which your surgeon will discuss with you. Then the side edge of the nail is removed, including the part that has grown in.

The toe is then dressed and bandaged.

The nail will slowly grow through at the same width, hopefully without digging in.

Are there any risks and possible complications?

Complications of toenail surgery are rare, but could include the following:

- **Bleeding** – The operation site may bleed through the bandage. This can happen while you are still in the hospital. If this occurs, additional dressings will be applied.

If bleeding occurs when at home, raise the foot and place gentle pressure on the toe over the top of the dressing for 15-20 minutes. If you are unable to stop the bleeding please contact the Day Surgery Unit or Hascombe Ward during normal opening hours or attend your nearest A&E department.

- **Infection** – If your toe becomes very red and swollen, very tender or starts producing a pus-like discharge, you may have an infection. See your GP, who can provide antibiotics to treat the infection, if required.
- **Recurrence** – There is a chance that even after surgery your ingrowing toenail may return. You can help prevent this by cutting your toenails properly and wearing well-fitting shoes. Your chiropodist can give good advice regarding the prevention of further problems.

Are there alternative treatments available?

Your GP or Chiropodist can often suggest alternative treatments for mild cases. Do not attempt to treat the problem yourself, as pain and infection may result. Surgery is usually recommended if the problem is severe or returns after treatment.

If the nail digs in again after wedge re-section, your surgeon may recommend permanently narrowing the nail, either by applying phenol to the base of the nail or by excising the root of the nail.

Will the procedure hurt?

After the surgery, the anaesthetic will keep your foot numb for a few hours. However when the anaesthetic wears off your foot may become very tender.

You may be provided with painkillers to take home with you.

It is advised that you take your first dose of pain relief before the local anaesthetic wears off.

When are the dressing and stitches removed?

The dressing on the toe will require changing in two or three days' time. The practice nurse at your GP surgery can do this for you. The nursing staff at the hospital will give you a letter to show your practice nurse so that she knows what treatment is required.

Keep your bandage clean and dry. You may be provided with a soft overshoe to protect the bandage when you walk. However, please bring suitable footwear with you for if a post-op shoe is not required.

If you have stitches your nurse will tell you when they can be removed.

Elevation and walking

For the next couple of days, rest your foot up as much as possible, to help reduce pain and swelling.

Your child will be able to walk on their foot. He/she may need to only put weight through the heel, dependent on instructions.

They may resume normal activities once their toe has healed.

Reference source

www.nhs.uk/conditions/ingrown-toenail/pages/introduction.aspx

Contact details

If you require further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Day Surgery Unit

Telephone: 01483 406783 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

Hascombe Ward

Telephone: 01483 464071

Out of hours advice

Call 111 (formerly NHS Direct)

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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