

Nail surgery

What is nail surgery?

- Nail surgery is a procedure in which either a portion of the nail or the full nail is removed under local anaesthetic and is offered to patients with problematic ingrown toenails which cannot be managed conservatively. This procedure can be done with or without the use of phenol which is a chemical used to cauterise the nail matrix and prevent the nail from regrowing **although regrowth can occur in around 10% of patients.**
- If the ingrown nail is a reoccurring problem related to the shape of the nail (involuted) then it may be advisable to have the procedure done with phenol to prevent regrowth of either the problematic portion of the nail or the whole nail depending on the severity.
- If the ingrown nail has occurred as a one off e.g. poor nail cutting, tight footwear, damage to the nail then the patient may wish to have the procedure without phenol to allow the nail or portion of nail to regrow although it cannot be predicted if it will regrow problematic or not.

Who is suitable for nail surgery?

- A full assessment is carried out prior to nail surgery to determine a patient's suitability for the procedure depending on their medical history, current medication, circulation age etc. In some cases, we may have to liaise with other health professionals such as the patients GP before nail surgery can be carried out.

What does nail surgery involve?

- Once a full assessment had been carried out and the patient has been deemed suitable for nail surgery they will be seated on a clinical bed and the affected toe will be cleaned with an antimicrobial spray at the injection site.
- Local anaesthetic is then injected into either side of the base of the affected toe. The anaesthetic is then given 5-10 minutes to take affect and the toe will be tested prior to beginning the surgery to ensure that it is numb.
- Once completely numb, a tourniquet will then be applied to the toe to minimise any bleeding during the surgery.
- The offending portion of the nail or the full nail will then be removed and depending on whether the patient has chosen to have phenol applied to prevent regrowth this will then be applied to the nail bed.
- The tourniquet is then removed, and a bulky dressing is applied to the toe which will have to remain on and dry for a few days.
- Depending on whether phenol has been applied the patient may need to return for further dressing appointments. As phenol creates a chemical burn the healing time is prolonged and therefor chance of infection is increased hence the patient will need subsequent dressing appointments in the clinic which are included in the nail surgery package of care.

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