



GENERAL SURGERY TREATMENT OF INGROWN TOENAIL

Purpose: The treatment is to elevate the lateral border of the nail to allow it to grow normally, out of skin.

As its name may indicate, an ingrown toenail is the consequence of the lateral edge of the nail growing into the skin. This causes a reaction of the tissues (inflammation) with pain and swelling. Subsequent infection and formation of granulation tissue will compound the problem.

Factors which may lead to the occurrence of this problem:

- Corners of nail too short
- Nail accidentally broken
- Shoes too tight
- Some sports (soccer, basketball)
- Anatomical predisposition

When the nail grows back after it was too short or broken, it continues to grow in the skin, on the lateral borders of the nail bed. This produces inflammation, infection (pain, redness and purulent discharge) and granulation tissue (extra skin, often red, humid, and sensitive.)

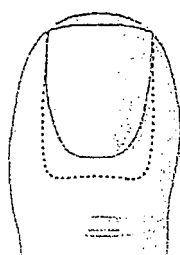
In order to have the nail grow back to normal, we have to stop the progression of the granulation tissue. To meet this goal, we begin the conservative treatment.

This treatment follows different steps after soaking the foot in salted water for 15 minutes:

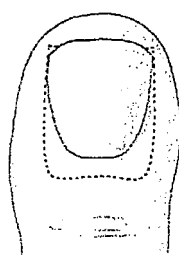
- Clean the borders of the nail
- Push away the skin on the lateral side of the nail bed, at least 15 timesⁱ
- Free the nail from the adjacent skin
- If necessary, following the nurse's or doctor's recommendation, apply silver nitrate every 2 days (to burn the granulation tissue)
- Apply cotton under the nail, in order to lift the corner of the nail from the nail bed. The cotton lifts the nail corner, allowing the infection to drain and the nail to grow gradually above the skin. The cotton needs to be changed every 2 days or before, if it fell off.

Although it is painful at the beginning, the pain decreases when the treatment is done on a regular basis. It is very important to do the treatment as often as it is recommended. We recommend taking Tylenol or Advil, 30 minutes prior the treatment. As the nail is lifted out of the skin and the swelling decreases, the pain gradually decreases also.

After this, make sure to continue to avoid tight shoes and to cut the nail straight.



CORRECTE



INCORRECTE

At the earliest sign of a recurrence, start soaking again and pushing a piece of cotton under the nail. When started early, the treatment will only be required for a few days, in most cases.

If the problem persists despite adequate care, please make a new appointment with the surgical clinic at 514-412-4489.

ⁱ This treatment has to be done 2-3 times a day until the nail has grown completely out of the adjacent skin. The frequency of the soaks can decrease once the signs of infection have disappeared (swelling, redness, pain). The treatment with the piece of cotton must continue until the nail has completely grown out of the skin.