

Lifetime Medical Associates *

1645 West Jackson Blvd www.rush.edu/lifetime
Chicago, IL 60612 Tel 312.942.8000



What is ingrown nail?

An ingrown nail occurs when the toenail becomes curved with a sharp end that grows downward and burrows into the toe.

This can occur with any toe, but usually happens to the big toes.

Wearing too-small shoes, improperly trimming the nail, bone abnormalities, or a toe injury can cause an ingrown nail.

People who are elderly, have diabetes, or have circulatory problems in their legs are more likely to have ingrown nails. This is also true of children and adolescents who may outgrow their shoes.

What are the symptoms of ingrown nail?

- The ingrown toenail may feel hard, swollen, and tender
- The toe becomes red, feels warm, and becomes very sore
- Pus or fluid may drain from the toe
- The skin grows over the ingrown toenail



What tests are needed?

The diagnosis of an ingrown toenail is most often made from looking at and examining it. If the ingrown nail is infected, a sample of pus or fluid may be taken and analyzed to determine which medicine should be used to treat it.

What treatment is needed?

If the problem is not severe, soaking your foot in warm, soapy water several times each day may resolve the problem. You may need to lift the edge of the ingrown toenail gently from its embedded position and insert some cotton to keep the nail separated from the toe. If the toe is severely infected, or the ingrown toenail recurs, your doctor may remove part of it. To do this, the toe is numbed and the doctor uses scissors to cut away the ingrown part of the toenail.

If the ingrown nail is infected, you will be given medication.

Toenail removal can be performed by your doctor or by a podiatrist, a doctor who specializes in foot problems.



Do

Do wear clean socks and open-toed shoes while your toe heals.



Recovery time

As ingrown nails recur, this can be a lifelong problem.

Treatment with soaking can take several weeks. If part of the ingrown toenail is cut away surgically, this requires two to three weeks to heal.



What can be done to stop it from happening again?

- Wear roomy shoes and socks
- Learn to cut your toenails properly. Trim them straight across with no rounding corner. Don't trim them too short. If you don't want to trim your toenails yourself, have a podiatrist do it
- Don't pick at your toenails or tear them off
- Always keep your feet clean



Further information on Ingrown nail can be found from:

American Academy of Family Physicians

<http://familydoctor.org/>

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons

515 Busse Highway

Park Ridge, Illinois 60068-3150

Telephone: 888-THE-FEET

(888-843-3338)

<http://www.acfas.org/brnails.html>