

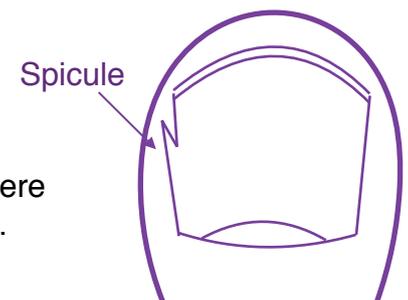
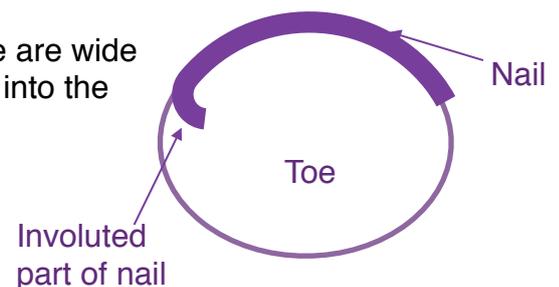
Ingrown Toenails and Nail Surgery

Symptoms

An ingrown toenail is when the side of the nail grows into your skin. They have a reputation for being very painful, and for good reason! They commonly become infected which results in swelling, redness pus and/or bleeding. A nail that is pressing into the skin without actually piercing the skin is not a true ingrown toenail, however this can still be very painful and the treatment will be similar.

Causes

- 🦶 Nail shape. Some nails curl inwards (involution) and some are wide or fan shaped - this encourages your nail to press or grow into the flesh.
- 🦶 Thickened nails make things worse.
- 🦶 Tight shoes and sock can also cause problems.
- 🦶 Toe deformities - for example, the nail of a clawed toe can create additional pressure.
- 🦶 Active, sporty people are particularly prone as they get hot and sweaty feet. This makes the skin weaker and more easily pierced by the nail.
- 🦶 Picking at nails or cutting them too short. This can leave a spicule at the side of the nail which can then grow into the flesh.
- 🦶 Hypertrophied unga labia - this is when the fold of fleshy skin beside the nail is particularly bulky. This might be something you were born with or can be caused by long term inflammation and infection.



What you can do

- 🦶 Learn how to cut your nails properly. Follow the natural contour of the nail and make sure the corner of the nail is visible above the skin. Filing your nails can also be helpful.
- 🦶 Maintain good foot hygiene, choose shoes and socks made of natural fibres and change them regularly.
- 🦶 If you think you have an ingrown toenail then contact a podiatrist for help. In the mean time, apply an antiseptic to the nail to prevent or limit infection.

What your podiatrist can do

- 🦶 Your podiatrist might trim the nail carefully to remove the corner that is pressing in. Even though we advise YOU not to do this, we have had lots of practice, have the right tools and can see your nail properly.
- 🦶 We will discuss ways to prevent and/or treat infection. This could mean antiseptics and dressings or referral to your GP for oral antibiotics.

Nail surgery

Particularly nasty or recurrent ingrown toenails may benefit from nail surgery. Under local anaesthetic your podiatrist will remove either a portion or all of your nail (a partial or total nail avulsion). Usually phenol will then be applied to prevent the nail from regrowing.

