



Your toenail surgery

How you should be involved in decisions about your healthcare and treatment.



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Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients considering nail surgery to treat their nail condition.

What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet will provide you with the required information to help you decide whether to proceed with toenail surgery. The leaflet will also provide you with pre and post surgery care, details of the procedure and make you aware of any complications which may arise.

Why do I require surgery?

You may require surgery to cure a painful nail condition such as:

- **Infected ingrown toenails.**
- **Thickened or distorted toenails.**
- **Toenails affected by a fungal infection.**
- **Toenails which are curving into your skin (known as involution).**



What type of surgery is available?

There are two types of toenail surgery:

Partial Nail Avulsion - This is undertaken when one or both sides of the toenail are ingrown. This type of surgery allows for an area of nail to remain in place, only removing the part of the nail causing concern.

Total Nail Avulsion - This is the complete removal of the toenail. This type of surgery results in permanent loss of the whole nail. The Podiatrist will discuss with you the type of surgery which is appropriate for your nail condition.

What are the potential benefits and risks of the procedure?

Removal of the offending toenail will ensure the nail condition is managed most effectively. This may reduce pain and risk of infection developing. As with any minor surgical procedure, there are a few potential risks. These may include development of a local infection, which means the wound may take longer to heal. An adverse reaction to the local anaesthetic or blistering of the surrounding skin due to use of a strong chemical (Phenol).

Are there safer or alternative treatment options?

If you feel you do not want to proceed with surgery, other options may include self management or support from an Independent Podiatrist (private). You will be discharged from the Podiatry Service and your GP informed of your decision.

What would happen if I did nothing?

Depending on your nail condition, further complications may develop if you do not receive treatment. These may include, development of an Infection affecting the skin or bone or development of wound under the toenail due to pressure.



Is there any preparation needed before the surgery?

On the day of the surgery eat normally and take your prescribed medication unless advised otherwise. You may also bring a friend or relative with you. Please ensure you bring footwear that has plenty of room for your toes, trainers are usually the best.

What happens during the procedure?

A Podiatrist will undertake your surgical procedure. The procedure will be carefully explained to you before treatment begins and you will be asked to sign a consent form. Signing the consent form shows that you understand and agree to the procedure being undertaken.

Your foot will be cleansed with disinfectant and you will receive an injection of local anaesthetic to the affected toe(s). A tourniquet (tight bandage) will be applied to remove the blood from the toe to prevent bleeding during the procedure.

The nail or section of nail will be removed and a chemical (Phenol) applied to the area to prevent regrowth of the nail. The total appointment time takes 45-60 minutes which includes pre surgical checks. However, the actual surgical procedure will take approximately 5-10 mins.

What happens after the procedure?

You will receive a leaflet on how to care for your wound. A supply of dressings will either be provided by your Podiatrist or General Practitioner, this will be discussed at your appointment. A follow-up appointment may be required depending on any risk factors which may affect the wound healing. If you are healthy, no follow-up appointment will be required and you will be discharged from the service.

Following the procedure, we recommend that you do not drive home as your motor insurance may not cover you while your toe is still numb.
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Occasionally pain may be experienced as the local anaesthetic wears off, which can be around 2 hours. This can be relieved by sitting with your feet up and if necessary, taking pain relief. Please avoid pain medication which contains aspirin and avoid alcohol as this may increase bleeding from the wound.

Will I be able to undertake my everyday activities?

Everyday activities like walking is fine as long as you wear appropriate footwear. Swimming and any activities which may result in your wound being bumped are best left until completely healed.

How long will the wound take to heal?

Partial nail avulsions take on average 6 weeks to heal, total nail avulsions can take 12 weeks or longer. However, some people will heal quicker than others. There are many factors to consider, such as smoking or poor circulation where healing may take longer.



Further Information:

A series of horizontal dotted lines provided for patient notes or additional information.

Useful Information for patients:

- NHS 24 - Phone: 111
- rcpod.org.uk
- www.nhsinform.scot
- www.nhs.uk





For further information and advice please contact:

For Aberdeen City:

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Aberdeen Health Village
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Aberdeen, AB24 5HY
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For Aberdeenshire:

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