The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Nail Surgery – Information Leaflet

Foot Health Services



The prevention of infection is a priority in all healthcare settings and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, a cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or an unexplained rash which could be infectious please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility. If your visit is essential then phone ahead to the department that you are visiting**
- **If you are unwell seek advice from 111 or your GP if required**
- **Help us to keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

Care Colleagues Collaboration Communities

What is nail surgery?

Nail surgery is a common and straightforward procedure used to treat painful or problematic nails. It may involve removing part of the nail (partial nail removal) or, in some cases, the whole nail (complete removal).

This treatment can be performed on both toes and fingers where appropriate.

When is nail surgery needed?

Use to treat:

- Ingrown nails
- Painful thickened nails caused by trauma or fungal infection

Do I need to give consent?

Yes, you will be asked to sign a consent form after the clinician explains the risks and benefits. If you are under 16 or cannot consent for yourself, a parent or legal guardian must sign on your behalf.

What are the benefits?

- Can improve nail shape – This may improve the shape and appearance of the nail and toe
- Pain relief and improved comfort – Removing the problem nail usually stops pain
- Lower infection risk – Helps prevent future infections
- Better mobility – Easier to wear shoes and walk comfortably

What are the risks?

Complications include:

- Pain or discomfort normally last for 1–2 days after surgery but can last longer if infection develops and the wound is not kept clean
- Nail regrowth (5% (1:20) of cases)
- Permanent nail loss (rare, unless part of the agreed treatment plan)
- Delayed healing (4–8 weeks)
- Nerve damage (rare)
- Allergic reaction (extremely rare)
- Blood clot (very unlikely)
- Amputation (extremely rare)

Are there any alternative options?

- No surgery – conservative treatment may be possible
- Surgical excision (normally undertaken by an Orthopaedic Surgeon) - nail and nail bed tissue removed, stitched, and healed in 2–3 weeks, this type of surgery can be more painful post operatively and has reported higher risks or nail regrowth

How is nail surgery completed?

- Local anaesthetic injection to numb the area so you feel no pain during the procedure
- A small band (tourniquet) is applied to stop the finger or toe from bleeding
- Part or all of the nail is removed
- A chemical (Phenol) is applied to prevent regrowth
- The small band or tourniquet is removed
- The wound is dressed
- You go home and rest
- A further appointment is booked for the same week to check the progress of the toe

Will it hurt?

- The surgery itself is painless, however, the injection of local anaesthetic can sting
- After surgery, mild pain is normal and can be reduced by taking Paracetamol or your normal painkiller

How long does healing take?

- Usually within four to eight weeks, depending on the type of surgery and your health

Will I need a dressing?

Yes, your toe will be covered with a thick dressing which is to be kept in place and dry for two to four days, this will be changed at your follow up clinic appointment where a smaller dressing will be applied. You will be asked to clean and redress the toe regularly until the toe heals.

Can I drive after surgery?

- No, you should not drive or attend work on the day of surgery
- You should rest at home on the day of the surgery is performed
- Most people return to normal activities after the first dressing change (three to four days after surgery)

Do I need to go to hospital?

No, surgery is usually done in a clinic. Hospital may be needed should you require a general anaesthetic (put to sleep) or with certain foot or health conditions.

Exceptional cases

- **Diabetes** – extra checks including blood tests and additional tests may be required
- **Warfarin and blood thinners** – blood test and medication review may be required prior to surgery; this is dependent on the type of medication and the reason you are taking it for
- **Pregnancy** – we try to avoid surgery in first and third trimester unless urgent / necessary
- **Patients with needle phobia** – a mild sedative can be arranged with your GP, however if you require a general anaesthetic, you will need to be referred to the hospital delaying your treatment

Will my nail grow back after surgery?

The nail will grow back unless phenol is used (the chemical used to stop a nail regrowing).

There is a small risk of the nail growing back even if Phenol is used – around 5% /1:20 cases) this may require further surgery or treatment.

What does the toe look like after surgery?

Every toe will look different however the photographs below show toes before and directly after surgery.

Partial Nail Removal



Ingrowing toenail before surgery



Surgery partial nail ablation



3 days after surgery

Total Nail Removal



Regrowth of previous total nail removal



Surgery to remove regrowth



3 days after operation

How do I contact the service?

Podiatry Department, Phoenix Health Centre

Parkfield Road, Wolverhampton WV4 6ED

Tel: 01902 444044

Monday–Friday, 8:30am–4:30pm (excluding Bank Holidays)

For emergencies outside these hours: Call NHS 111

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。

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