

## **Ingrown Toenails**

Ingrown nails, the most common nail impairment, are nails whose corners or sides dig painfully into the soft tissue of nail grooves, often leading to irritation, redness, and swelling. Usually, toenails grow straight out. Sometimes, however, one or both corners or sides curve and grow into the flesh. The big toe is usually the victim of this condition, but other toes can also become affected.

Ingrown toenail may be caused by:

Improperly trimmed nails (Trim then straight across, then file the edges )

Shoe pressure; crowding of toes Repeated trauma to the feet from normal activities If you suspect an infection due to an ingrown toenail, immerse the foot in a warm salt water soak for 5 minutes several times daily. People with diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, or other circulatory disorders must seek podiatric medical care as soon as possible. Other "do-it-yourself" treatments, including any attempt to remove any part of an infected nail or the use of over-the-counter medications, should be avoided. Nail problems should be evaluated and treated by your podiatrist, who can diagnose the ailment, and then prescribe medication or another appropriate treatment.

A podiatrist will resect the ingrown portion of the nail and may prescribe a topical or oral medication to treat the infection. If ingrown nails are a chronic problem, your podiatrist can perform a procedure to permanently prevent ingrown nails. The corner of the nail that ingrows, along with the matrix or root of that piece of nail, are removed by use of a chemical, a laser, or by other methods.