



Your
Podiatrist
Talks
About

Nail
Surgery

Nail Surgery

Nail surgery is a common procedure performed by most podiatrists to effectively treat an ingrown toenail – a nail that has pierced (or is pressing against) the adjacent skin of the toe causing pain and inflammation and sometimes infection.

Surgery may be required when an ingrown toenail repeatedly gets infected, is continually painful, the patient is unable to wear shoes or the condition inhibits work, sporting or other activities.

Before surgery is recommended, your podiatrist will explore other conservative treatment options.



The offending portion of the nail is trimmed away

What does a partial nail avulsion involve?

Your podiatrist will conduct a complete assessment, taking a medical history, a list of any medications that have been prescribed for you as well as considering any other clinical factors that will determine whether or not this surgery is suited to you. An assessment will generally also include an examination of blood supply to the foot.

The procedure itself is performed under local anaesthetic via injection into the toe to numb the area. The anaesthetic will wear off in about two hours.

Nail surgery performed by podiatrists

A 'Partial Nail Avulsion' (known as a PNA or nail root and matrix resection) is a minor nail procedure which aims to permanently treat ingrown toenails. The procedure is usually performed in podiatrists' rooms, takes around one hour and the patient is able to walk immediately afterwards.



Only the affected segment of nail is removed, leaving a small area at the base of the nail (underlying the cuticle) to heal after the procedure.

Once numb, a tight elastic ring called a tourniquet is applied to the toe to control bleeding and the area is prepped to minimise the risk of infection.

The offending portion of the nail is then gently lifted and trimmed away, generally without the toe being cut or stitched. Both sides or the entire nail may be removed this way. A chemical may also be used at this point to assist in preventing nail regrowth.

Once the procedure is completed, the tourniquet is removed and a sterile surgical dressing is applied. The patient is able to walk immediately afterwards, however assistance getting home is strongly recommended.

What happens after the procedure?

Re-dressings at home and a few consultations with your podiatrist may be required over the two to three weeks following the procedure. For the first few days after the procedure pain relief, the use of open toed shoes and activity modification may be necessary, however interference with day to day activities is generally minimal.



Postoperative dressings will require some further attention at home.

What are the potential complications?

As with any surgical procedure there is some risk of complication, however this procedure is known to be very safe and effective.

The most common side-effects are post-operative infection in the short term and the possibility of regrowth of the nail over time. The risks of infection can be minimised through good post-operative care and your podiatrist will advise and assist with your situation.

How your podiatrist can help

Regular visits to your podiatrist can manage and prevent ingrown toenails, alleviate pain, and help keep you on your feet and mobile.

About podiatrists

Podiatrists are highly skilled health professionals trained to deal with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs. Podiatrists have completed a Bachelor of Podiatry or higher degree, and are continually upgrading their skills and knowledge through further education and training.

All podiatrists undergo training in their undergraduate program to safely administer local anaesthetic and perform nail surgery.

Additional post-graduate training is required in both Australia and New Zealand in order to perform deep tissue and bone surgery.

Many health funds in Australia provide cover for podiatry services on their ancillary tables and government funded services are available through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, some public hospitals and community health centres. In New Zealand,

some podiatry services may be partly or fully covered by the Accident Compensation Corporation.

*This information is not to be used as a substitute for podiatric or medical assistance.

Where can I find a podiatrist?

To find a podiatrist online go to www.findapodiatrist.org.

More information about foot care is available at www.feet.org.au.

In Australia refer to your Yellow Pages™ for a list of podiatrists in your area, or contact the Australian Podiatry Association in your state. In New Zealand contact Podiatry New Zealand Inc.

Photos courtesy of Department of Podiatry, La Trobe University



Hi, I am Dr Damien Lafferty. My clinic specialises in the treatment of Ingrown Toenails, Bunions, Hammertoes, Arthritis Morton's neuroma, Recalcitrant plantar fasciitis (heel spurs, Flat foot reconstruction and Recalcitrant plantar warts.

Many of my treatments are permanent, non-surgical procedures.

As a qualified surgeon, I also utilise the most up to date, research driven procedures that typically involve lesser invasive procedures, much quicker recuperation times and a marked reduction in post-operative pain.

Where to get help

Sore Feet? Ingrown Toenails? Warts? or any medical concerns regarding your feet, please call my clinic on (02) 9326 9981.

Things to remember

Good foot health is important for people of all ages.

As university trained professionals who specialise in the treat foot conditions, we offer a full range of podiatric care including surgery.

Members of the Australian Podiatry Association and Australasian College of Podiatric Surgeons.

Registered with the Podiatrists Registration Board (NSW Health)



Dr. Lafferty is a Commonwealth accredited Podiatric Surgeon, a specialist foot and ankle surgeon.

- FACPS, MSc, BSc, POST GRAD DIP (Adv Pod), MAPoDA
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