

Ingrown Toenails



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Ingrowing toenails can be a very painful condition and are caused when part of the nail pierces the flesh of the toe resulting in an inflammatory response. In severe cases it can cause pus and growth of tissue known as hypergranulation tissue which can look a bit like a “brain” out the side of the toe and can bleed very easily. Ingrown toenails will often ooze a thin yellowish/pink fluid which will smell and cause the toe to stick to the socks. Many “ingrown toenails” that are actually curved or “involuteds” nails which are applying pressure to the toe causing pain but have not punctured the skin.

Although antibiotics are commonly prescribed by GP’s for ingrown toenails they do not treat the toenail puncturing the toe, only the infection and swelling. Cutting a “v” in the middle of the nail is a common home treatment but as nail does not heal from a cut or split and this will not help the issue and should not be tried. If treated in good time a podiatrist can often resolve the issue, sometimes in a single treatment. The longer the issue goes untreated the worse it will get and it may not be possible to rectify the issue without lengthy treatment or surgical intervention to remove the nail.

If you think you have an ingrown toenail you should make a podiatry appointment as soon as possible. While awaiting treatment avoid tight fitting shoes, keep the area covered with a dressing being careful not to bind it tightly around the toe and bathe the foot daily in a footbath of warm salt water for approximately 10 minutes (1 handful table salt to 1 basin warm water) to help cleanse and sooth the toe.

