

Podiatric Procedure for Onychocryptosis

What is Onychocryptosis?

Onychocryptosis (also known as Ingrown toenail) is a common foot problem affecting people of all ages which is common on big toes. When the nail grows or is injured, it may pierce the skin and penetrate into the flesh, leading to wound infection, pain and subsequently resulting in overgrown of granulation tissue and paronychia. This may subside after removing a section of the nail conservatively, but if the condition persists you may require a toenail avulsion procedure.

Toenail avulsion procedure

Toenail avulsion procedure requires the administration of local anesthesia into the toe and the application of tourniquet to stop any bleeding. Local anesthesia numbs a specific part of the body to relieve pain temporarily. Podiatrist will remove the impinged toenail and part or all of the nail matrix will be destroyed using a chemical agent to prevent recurrence, as clinically indicated. After the procedure, the toenail will become narrower. The whole treatment procedure takes about an hour to complete.

Before the procedure

1. Completing the pre-operation assessment.
2. The Podiatrist will explain to you the indication of the procedure and any potential complications. You are required to sign an informed consent form if you agree to proceed with the procedure after understanding all the information regarding the procedure.
3. You need to inform your Podiatrist about any medical conditions, any oral medications you are using and any known drug allergies that you have.
4. No fasting is required prior to the administration of local anesthesia, you are advised to eat in prior to the procedure.
5. No abstaining of therapeutic drugs is required prior to the procedure.
6. People under the age of 18-year must be accompanied by their parent(s) or legal guardian who shall be required to give written consent for the procedure. People aged 18 or above are also advised to be accompanied by a friend or family member on the day of procedure.
7. Please wear comfortable, loose clothing and bring a pair of sandals or slippers to avoid excessive pressure to wound.
8. Please remove any nail varnish prior to the procedure.

After the procedure

1. You will be monitored for at least 15 minutes after the procedure.
2. Do not drive on the day of the procedure. You need to rest and no fasting is required for the remainder of the day.
3. You can resume normal activities on the day following the procedure. Please note, Podiatrists cannot issue a sick leave certificate, but an attendance certificate will be provided upon request.
4. The anaesthetic effect will last for 1-2 hours. Please be careful when walking whilst the toes still be numb.
5. After anaesthetic effect has disappeared, there may be mild pain from the wound. If the pain is unbearable, please take a general analgesic pill.
6. There may be mild bleeding from the wound after the procedure. If blood soaks through the dressing, please apply extra sterile gauze on top and fix it with adhesive tape and elevate your leg for 15 minutes. **DO NOT under any circumstances remove the dressing applied by the Podiatrist.**
7. If the above fails to control the bleeding, accompany with increasing pain or the toe become hot, red and swollen etc. Please immediately seek medical advice and contact our department.
8. Please avoid vigorous sports for 1 week after procedure to avoid pressure and further injury to your toes.
9. Please note that the toe and the dressing must be kept clean and dry, you should attend the Podiatry follow-up appointment as scheduled.
10. Please follow the instructions for wound dressing after the procedure to minimize risk of infection.

Potential complications

There are several potential complications for this procedure namely:

- (i) Risk of an allergic reaction to the local anesthesia
- (ii) Post-operative bleeding and pain
- (iii) Risk of infection
- (iv) Recurrence of the ingrown toenail (less than 5 %)
- (v) Suboptimal wound healing resulting in scarring and pain, toenail deformity or thickening

Serious consequence risks/complications

- (i) Tissue necrosis resulting in amputation
- (ii) Severe adverse drug reaction or drug allergy (including skin rashes, facial and airway swelling, headache etc. Drug allergy include shortness of breath, hypotension, syncope or collapse etc.)

Remarks

This is general information only and the list of potential complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur despite all precautions. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information, please contact your podiatrist.