

Information for Patients before Nail Surgery (NS1)

Nail surgery is a procedure commonly carried out to remove a part or all of a nail that is infected, curved, distorted and/or thick and that is causing pain.

Permanent removal of the nail involving the use of phenol often cures the problem. This has a 92% success rate (our audit results give us a 1% re-growth rate!)

A local anaesthetic is injected in to the toe to stop you feeling pain. A small tourniquet is used to prevent bleeding. When the toe is numb the piece of nail causing the problem is removed, then a chemical called phenol will be applied to stop it growing back. The tourniquet is removed and the toe is dressed. You will be given advice about how to look after your toe and a follow up appointment for a redressing will be booked for you 1-7 days later. The anaesthetic will wear off in 2-4 hours.

If you have an active job you may need to take a day or two off to rest the toe. You should not go back to sport for at least 3 weeks and not swim until it has healed.

Alternative treatments include careful nail cutting, avoiding tight fitting footwear and regularly having the nail cut back by a Podiatrist.

Risks of not having the procedure are continuing and/or recurring infection (if this is the original cause of your painful nail) and continuing discomfort.

Possible complications of having the procedure are:

- Infection in the wound
- Bruising from the injection
- Continuing numbness after the injection
- Allergic reaction to the local anaesthetic
- Pain
- Inflammation/infection of the covering of the bone
- Regrowth of the nail - if this occurs it is usually a very small weakened portion
- Persistent wound drainage
- Long healing time of 4-12 weeks if phenol is used

Cosmetic changes - usually when healed normal skin grows back to cover the area where the nail was removed. However in rare cases the nail may grow back deformed even when the pain is gone.

If you are happy to go ahead you will need to:

- Have a light meal on the day
- If applicable remove any nail varnish
- Wear an open toe sandal or large slipper
- Bring any prescribed medicines with you
- Bring a friend/relative/carer for support if you wish
- Do not use public transport or walk home afterwards as this may cause bleeding. Please arrange for someone to take you home by car or taxi.

The procedure takes about 20 minutes but allow an hour for your appointment (there is LOTS of paperwork!). Afterwards you will be given full instructions on care of your toe, a dressing pack and follow up arrangements.

Important note: Driving when your toe is anaesthetised may make you unfit to drive and invalidate your insurance.

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