

## Patient Information Leaflet for Ingrowing Toenail

### Surgery (Wedge Resection)

Your clinician has recommended a minor surgical procedure called a wedge resection to treat your ingrowing toenail. This leaflet is designed to give you a better understanding of what the condition is, how the procedure works, what to expect afterwards, and the associated risks. Please take time to read it carefully and feel free to ask any questions before your surgery.

#### What is an ingrowing toenail?

An ingrowing toenail occurs when part of the nail grows abnormally into the surrounding skin. This can lead to:

- Pain and tenderness, especially when pressure is applied to the toe
- Redness and swelling
- Infection (sometimes with pus)
- Thickened or overgrown skin around the nail

In most cases, the ingrowing toenail is caused by previous trauma to the toe — such as stubbing it or having something dropped on it. Poor nail-cutting technique (such as cutting too far down the sides) can also contribute, although it's rarely the sole cause.

#### What is the purpose of the procedure?

The goal of a wedge resection is to permanently remove the portion of the nail that is growing into the skin and causing discomfort. This not only relieves symptoms but also aims to prevent the problem from recurring.

#### How is the procedure carried out?

##### 1. Preparation and anaesthetic

The toe will be cleaned using an antiseptic solution. Two local anaesthetic injections will be given at the base of the toe — one on either side — to numb the area. These may sting briefly but will soon take effect and ensure you feel no pain during the procedure.

##### 2. Removal of the nail segment

Once numb, a specially designed instrument is used to cut down the side of the toenail. The section of nail that is causing the problem — including the root under the skin — is removed using forceps. Any excess skin that has developed due to prolonged irritation may also be gently removed at this stage.

##### 3. Prevention of regrowth

A chemical called phenol is applied to the nail bed where the offending part of the nail was removed. This helps to prevent that segment of nail from growing back in the future.

##### 4. Dressing the toe

A sterile dressing and bandage will be applied to protect the wound and absorb any fluid that may ooze from the site in the first 24 - 48 hours.

## What are the possible risks?

Although this is a minor and commonly performed procedure, it does carry some potential risks:

- **Recurrence** – In some cases, the nail may regrow, either partially or fully, which may require further treatment or a repeat procedure.
- **Infection** – Despite sterile technique, surgical wounds can become infected. Please contact us if you notice increasing redness, swelling, pus, or worsening pain.
- **Bleeding** – Mild bleeding is common after the operation, but occasionally more significant bleeding may occur.
- **Pain** – While local anaesthetic usually works well, complete numbness is not guaranteed. Some discomfort after the procedure is normal and can usually be managed with over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- **Allergic reaction** – Rarely, patients may experience an allergic reaction to the anaesthetic, antiseptic solutions, or materials used during the procedure. Please inform us of any known allergies before the procedure.

## What should I do after the procedure?

- Keep the dressing dry and clean for the first couple of days to allow healing to begin.
- You will need to return to the surgery 2 to 3 days after the operation to have the dressing reviewed or changed by one of our nurses.
- If you notice signs of infection, or if your pain significantly worsens, please contact the surgery for advice.

## Additional considerations

- **Driving** – Due to the numbing injections and dressing, you will not be able to drive safely after the procedure. Please arrange for someone to collect you, or plan for a taxi journey home.
- **Time off work** – You may need to take a couple of days off, particularly if your job involves standing for long periods, manual labour, or potential risk to the toe (e.g., working on a building site).
- **Footwear** – You should wear open or loose-fitting footwear for a few days post-procedure to avoid pressure on the toe.

## Consent

Before proceeding, we will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm you understand the procedure, the risks, and alternatives, and agree to go ahead. Please read the form carefully and ask your clinician if anything is unclear.

## Questions or concerns?

If you have any further questions before or after your procedure, please speak to one of our clinical team. You can contact us by phone or in person — we're here to support you.