

Ingrown Toenail Removal

What to do after the procedure

1. Antibiotic ointment will be applied to the toe immediately after the procedure. The ointment is soothing and also promotes faster healing. You should apply the antibiotic ointment twice daily until the wound is completely healed. We like the over-the-counter (nonprescription) antibiotic ointment Mycitracin Plus because of the numbing medication mixed in with the antibiotic.
2. You may shower the day after the surgery. Gently dry the area and apply antibiotic ointment after showering. Avoid bathing, swimming, or soaking the toe for the next 2 weeks. Try to keep the toe clean and dry.
3. Your bandage will help to pad and protect the wound, while absorbing drainage from the wound. You can replace the bandage if blood or fluid soaks the bandage. Please keep the wound bandaged for at least 1 week after the surgery.
4. You may experience some pain after the procedure. If you experience discomfort, you can take ibuprofen (brand names: Advil, Motrin, Nuprin), three 200-mg tablets three times a day with food, and acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol), two 325-mg tablets every 4 hours.
5. You should wear loose-fitting shoes or sneakers for the first 2 weeks after the procedure. Please avoid wearing high-heeled or tight-fitting shoes in the future. You should avoid running, jumping, or strenuous activity for 2 weeks after the surgery. Teenagers should not participate in physical education for 1 to 2 weeks after the procedure.
6. Infection may develop in the toe in the first few weeks after the surgery. Call your doctor if you develop increasing pain, swelling, redness, or drainage from the toe.
7. Trimming the nails straight across the top of the nail is the best way to prevent another ingrown nail from developing. The nail must not be cut down into the corners, or picked at or torn off. If you should develop another ingrown nail, see your doctor early, as treatment may prevent the need for additional surgery.



Additional comments from your family doctor

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This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.

The American Academy of Family Physicians provides health information on the World Wide Web at familydoctor.org.

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