

- Bunions 
- Diabetic Foot Care 
- Flat Feet 
- Hammertoes 
- Heel Pain 



- High-Arched Feet 
- Senior Foot Care 
- Toenail Conditions 
- Bone Spurs 
- Childrens Foot Care 

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## Home Treatment Myths

### Myth

Cutting a notch in the nail will reduce the tendency for the nail to curve downward.

### Truth

Cutting a notch doesn't affect the growth of the nail. New nail growth will continue to curve downward.

### Myth

Repeated trimming of the nail borders is a good way to treat ingrown toenails.

### Truth

Repeated nail trimming fails to correct future nail growth and can make the condition worse.

### Myth

You can buy effective ingrown toenail treatments at the drug store.

### Truth

Over-the-counter topical medications mask the pain but fail to treat the underlying problem.

### Myth

Cotton placed under the nail will relieve pain.

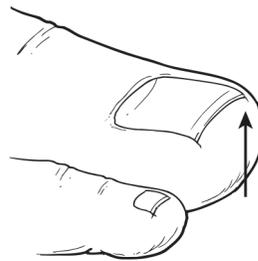
### Truth

Cotton placed under the nail can harbor bacteria.

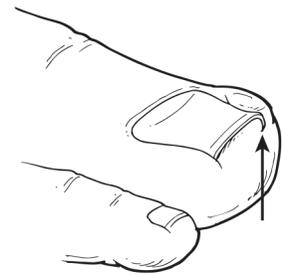
## What is an Ingrown Toenail?

When a toenail is ingrown, the nail is curved downward and grows into the skin, usually at the nail borders (the sides of the nail).

This "digging in" of the nail irritates the skin, often creating pain, redness, swelling, and warmth in the toe. If an ingrown nail causes a break in the skin, bacteria may enter and cause an infection in the area, which is often marked by drainage and a foul odor. However, even if your toe isn't painful, red, swollen, or warm, a nail that curves downward into the skin can progress to an infection.



Normal nail



Ingrown nail

## What Causes an Ingrown Toenail?

Ingrown toenails can develop for various reasons. In many people, the tendency to have this common disorder is inherited. In other cases, an ingrown toenail is the result of trauma, such as stubbing your toe, having an object fall on your toe, or engaging in activities that involve repeated pressure on the toes, such as kicking or running.

The most common cause of ingrown toenails is improper trimming. Cutting your nails too short encourages the skin next to the nail to fold over the nail. Another cause of ingrown toenails is wearing shoes that are tight or short.

Certain nail conditions are often associated with ingrown toenails. For example, if you have had a toenail fungal infection or if you have lost a nail through trauma, you are at greater risk for developing an ingrown toenail.



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## TREATMENT OF INGROWN TOENAILS INCLUDES NON-SURGICAL AND SURGICAL OPTIONS

Sometimes initial treatment for ingrown toenails can be safely performed at home. However, home treatment is strongly discouraged if you suspect you have an infection, or if you have a medical condition that puts your feet at high risk—for example, diabetes, nerve damage in the foot, or poor circulation.

### Stage One

Mild Ingrown Toenails are a common toenail condition that affects about 58% of the population.

**Symptoms Include:** Skin redness, mild swelling and pain (especially when pressure is applied to the left or right side of the nail) with no pus or drainage.

### Stage Two

Moderate Ingrown Toenails are caused from bacteria that infects the ingrown area of the toenail.

**Symptoms Include:** Increased redness of the skin, swelling and pain which may be associated with white or yellow colored pus or drainage from the area. Thickening of the nail and separation of the nail plate from the nail becomes apparent.

### Stage Three

Severe Ingrown Toenails often require surgical remedies that result in zero recurrence rates with patients.

**Symptoms Include:** Further increase in redness, swelling and pain with formulation of extra tissue which can add to pus formation and more significant infection.

## Types of Treatment

Home treatments can be useful if there is no sign of infection. You can soak your foot in room-temperature water with Epsom salts and gently massage the side of the nail fold to reduce inflammation.

Oral antibiotics. If an infection is present, an oral antibiotic may be prescribed.

Surgery. A simple procedure, often performed in the office, is commonly needed to ease the pain and remove the offending nail. Surgery may involve numbing the toe and removing a corner of the nail, a larger portion of the nail, or the entire nail.

Permanent removal. Various techniques may be used to destroy or remove the nail root. This treatment prevents the recurrence of an ingrown toenail. Your surgeon will determine the most appropriate procedure for you.

Following nail surgery, a light bandage will be applied. Most people experience very little pain after surgery and may resume normal activity the next day. If your surgeon has prescribed an oral antibiotic, be sure to take all the medication, even if your symptoms have improved.

