

Nail Surgery Explained:

Risks and Benefits

Nail surgery is a low risk procedure which involves removing all or part of a toe-nail, using local anaesthetic.

It is only performed after a thorough review of your medical history. Certain medical conditions or medications can affect the action of anaesthetics and also your ability to heal. Therefore, you must inform the podiatrist if you have experienced reactions to vaccinations or insect bites, such as fainting or breathlessness.

What does it involve?

Two injections, one each side of the toe, are used to make the toe feel numb. This may be uncomfortable but once working, although you may feel a slight sense of pressure, you will not feel pain. There may be mild swelling or bruising in the area, which will soon disappear.

Part or all of the toe-nail is carefully lifted from the nail bed, requiring no cutting (and so no stitches) of the skin.

A chemical, phenol (or carbolic acid) is used to destroy the nail bed to prevent regrowth of the portion of nail that was removed. This can, in rare cases, cause slight burning or blistering which will be very limited.

Finally, a sterile dressing is applied to prevent dirt getting into the wound. The procedure takes approximately 60 minutes. As the local anaesthetic takes 2-3 hours to wear off, you are advised **not** to drive yourself home, but to make alternative arrangements.

Any discomfort or pain can be relieved by simple pain killers such as Paracetamol (not Aspirin).

You will be given an information sheet on post-operative care before you leave the surgery, plus a date within 7 days for your re-dressing appointment, which **must** be kept.

How long does it take to heal?

Usually between 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the type of procedure performed. You can return to work the day after the procedure, providing you wear footwear which will accommodate the dressing and does not squeeze the toes. You will be expected to redress the area yourself in-between clinic appointments.

There may be some discharge from the wound, but this is quite normal and should be expected. Post-operative infection is rare, and can easily be treated with a course of antibiotics. The wound will be monitored by the nail surgery team until healing is satisfactory.

Will the nail grow back?

No procedure can offer 100% success rate, but our research suggests up to 95% success with this particular form of treatment.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this procedure, please do not hesitate to consult your Podiatrist at the number on the front of this leaflet.