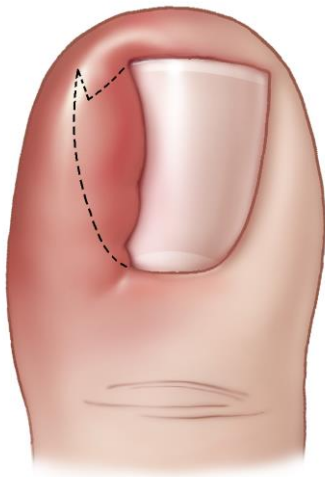


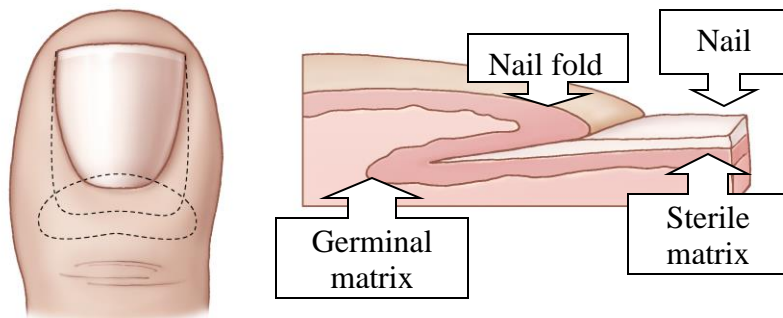
Ingrown Toenail



Ingrown toenails are a common, painful condition particularly among teenagers. Any of your toenails can become ingrown, but it more often affects the great toe. An ingrown nail occurs when the skin on one or both sides of a nail grows over the edges of the nail, or when the nail itself grows into the skin. Redness, pain and swelling at the corner of the nail may result and infection may soon follow. Sometimes a small amount of pus can be seen draining from the area.

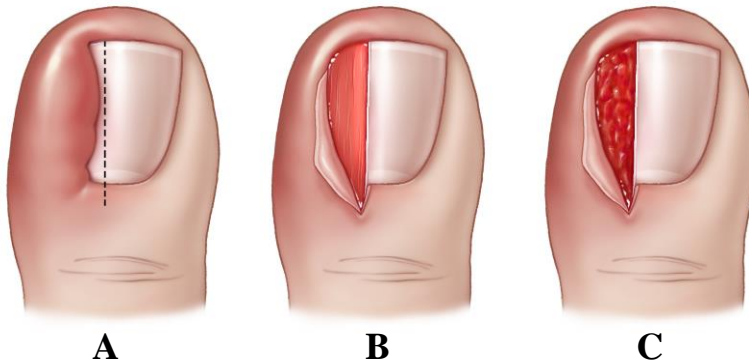
Ingrown nails may develop for many reasons. Some cases are congenital- the nail is just too large for the toe. Trauma, such as stubbing the toe or having the toe stepped on, may also cause an ingrown nail.

However, the most common cause of an ingrown toenail is tight shoe wear or improper grooming & trimming of the nail.



Ingrown toenails should be treated as soon as they are recognized. If recognized early (before infection sets in), home care may be successful in preventing the need for further treatment.

1. Soak the foot in warm water 3-4 times daily.
2. Keep the foot dry during the rest of the day.
3. Wear comfortable shoes with adequate room for the toes. Consider wearing sandals until the condition clears up.
4. You may take ibuprofen or acetaminophen for pain relief.
5. If no improvement in 2-3 days, or if the condition worsens, call your doctor.



If excessive inflammation, swelling, pain and discharge is present, the toenail is probably infected and should be treated by a physician (**A**). Oral antibiotics

may be needed and the nail partially or completely removed (**B**). The doctor can surgically remove a portion of the nail, a portion of the underlying nail bed, some of the adjacent soft tissues and even a part of the growth center (**C**). Surgery is effective in eliminating the nail edge from growing inward and cutting into the fleshy folds as the toenail grows forward. Permanent removal of the nail may be advised for those children with chronic, recurrent infected ingrown toenails.

Unless the problem is congenital, the best way to prevent ingrown toenails is to protect the feet from trauma and to wear shoes and hosiery (socks) with adequate room for the toes. Nails should be cut straight across with a clean, sharp nail trimmer without tapering or rounding the corners. Trim the nails no shorter than the edge of the toe. Keep the feet clean and dry.

