



St Margarets Foot Clinic

Preparing for Nail Surgery and Your Aftercare

Patient Information Leaflet

What is nail surgery?

Nail surgery is the removal of all of the toenail or part of the nail. A local anaesthetic is used so that you will feel no pain during the procedure. After the removal of the nail, a chemical (phenol) may be applied to the exposed nail bed to prevent regrowth by destroying the nail cells. (this chemical is 95% successful). Healing takes between four to ten weeks.

On the day of the surgery:

- Please take a bath or shower.
- Please remove all traces of nail varnish.
- Do not drink any alcohol.
- Eat a normal light meal before the surgery.
- Take any medication as normal unless advised otherwise.
- Bring suitable footwear that will fit over a bulky dressing like open-toed sandals (not flip flops/shoes/trainers).
- You are advised not to drive straight after you have had the surgery, ideally for up to 24 hours.
- You should not travel home by public transport to avoid injury.

Please inform us if you have had any anaesthetic already in the last 24 hours.

The procedure

The procedure will be performed in the podiatry clinic by a podiatrist and normally takes about 1 hour.

A local anaesthetic will be injected into both sides of the base of the toe. The sensation of both touch and pressure are not affected, this is normal. The local anaesthetic may cause some discomfort when being injected into the toe.

Once the toe has been fully anaesthetised, a tourniquet (tight band) will be applied to the toe to prevent bleeding during the procedure.

After the surgery, the tourniquet will be removed, the toe will be checked for return of your blood supply to the toe and a sterile dressing will be applied.

You will then remain for a short period of time in the clinic with your foot up and the dressing will be checked to make sure there is not too much bleeding before you leave the clinic.

Possible side effects of local anaesthetic

Side effects are rare, however those that may occur are:

- nervousness
- dizziness
- blurred sight or shakiness
- drowsiness
- fits
- Loss of consciousness
- breathing difficulties
- low blood pressure
- slow heartbeat

In extremely rare cases, local anaesthetics have caused an allergic reaction with rashes, swelling or very low blood pressure. Adrenalin is kept on site and used if needed.

You must inform the podiatrist of any previous reactions or complications that have happened when you have had a local anaesthetic in the past.

After the surgery

- The toe may remain numb for up to 2 hours. You should rest the affected foot as much as possible, especially in the first 24 – 48 hours by raising it on a pillow or cushion. Wear a sock at all times especially in bed to prevent the dressing getting dirty and falling off.
- Take your normal painkillers to reduce any discomfort (if needed) and follow the instructions on the patient information leaflet. If you have been prescribed aspirin by your GP or consultant you should continue to take this. Avoid Ibuprofen type painkillers.
- Keep the dressings dry and in place. A small amount of blood/fluid may appear through the dressing. This is normal. However, if you experience a lot of bleeding which cannot be stopped by raising your foot, you should seek medical advice.
- Avoid drinking alcohol following the surgery
- You may need time off from school or work. It is important to avoid any undue pressure or injury in the toe, it may be advisable to inform your teacher/employer of the procedure that has been carried out.

Redressings

- The first redressing will be undertaken within seven days of the surgery. The bulky dressing will be replaced by a much thinner sterile dressing
- Following nail surgery the toe will weep and stay moist at first. Small amounts of blood or discharge are normal and are an essential part of the healing process. This discharge does not mean that the wound has become infected
- Do not use antiseptic creams or solutions as these may affect the wound healing process
- If you experience a sudden increase in temperature, pain or excessive inflammation/swelling this may indicate that the toe has become infected. Please contact your Podiatrist or GP or Out of Hours Services for advice as further treatment may be required
- You will be monitored at the clinic until your toe has completely healed, normally about 4 -10 weeks. (If you are planning a holiday during this period, please contact Podiatry prior to your appointment)
- Avoid strenuous exercise or sport until the nail bed has fully healed.