



Minor Nail Surgery

What to expect:

The Podiatrist undertaking the procedure will assess whether it is necessary to remove the whole nail or only part of the nail. They will discuss which procedure is best for you. Sometimes the only option is to remove the whole nail.

The procedure will take approximately 45 minutes and as part of the treatment, you will need to have a local anaesthetic to numb the toe. Most of the time taken is to let the toe become numb enough to begin.

The cosmetic appearance of the nail will be permanently changed, whether that be the whole nail removed or only partial. In a very small percentage of cases, the removed nail may grow back.

Healing times vary from person to person, however, most will heal between 6-12 weeks. This depends on several factors: infection, age, general health, activity levels and your compliance in following the Podiatrist's after care instructions.

Please note that if your medical situation changes, we may not be able to proceed with the nail surgery. The ultimate decision will be made by the clinician.

What to do before the procedure:

- Eat your normal breakfast or lunch.
- Remove any nail varnish from your nails.
- Wash your feet and wear clean socks/tights.
- Arrange for a taxi or a relative/friend to take you home afterwards. You are advised not to drive until the effects of the local anaesthetic have worn off, this may take several hours. To be safe we say wait until the following day, as your insurance may be void.
- Bring any tablets or medication that you normally use throughout the day e.g., inhalers (for asthmatics).
- Bring roomy slippers or open toe sandals because the dressings are very bulky.
- Children below 16 years must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian otherwise the procedure will not be undertaken.

During the procedure:

- Please inform the Podiatrist of any changes in your medication or health. A second assessment will take place to assess your health status has not changed and surgery is still required.
- A consent form will be completed and will require a signature from you or a legal guardian present for under 16's.
- The Podiatrist will inject the local anaesthetic into each side of your toe to make it completely numb.
- Once the toe is numb, the Podiatrist will place a tourniquet over the toe. This stops the bleeding during the procedure.
- The Podiatrist will then remove either part or the entire toenail.
- Once the nail has been removed, a chemical called Phenol is rubbed into the nail bed to prevent the nail from growing back.
- The tourniquet is removed ready for the dressing.
- A large sterile dressing is placed around the toe which you will need to keep on and keep dry until your first redressing appointment. Which should be the following day.

After your appointment:

Your toe may remain numb for several hours. **Do not drive after surgery** until the effects of the anaesthetic have worn off.

You will be asked to rest your foot as much as possible for the rest of the day. You might experience some discomfort in that case take a couple paracetamol, **do not take aspirin as pain relief**. However, if you take a low dose of aspirin as part of your prescribed daily medication, continue to take as this is indicated by your GP.

It is most likely you will be okay to return to your normal job or school the following day. For jobs where you stand/walk a lot, your Podiatrist will advise you on what to do. You are strongly recommended not to participate in any sporting activity until you are advised further by your Podiatrist.

You might notice some discharge and/or spots of blood on the dressing – this is quite normal. The dressing will be changed at your first follow-up appointment. It is important to keep the dressing on, if it becomes loose or has discharge on it, **do not remove the dressing** add another dressing on top and more adhesive tape to hold it in place, as supplied by your Podiatrist.

Dressing instructions:

Keep the dressing clean, dry and intact, even when taking a bath or shower, until you attend your first redressing appointment. The Podiatrist will show you how to dress your toe and supply you with sterile dressings for the next 7 days. During the first week the dressing should be changed once or twice daily depending on the level of discharge from the wound. Make sure you have clean hands.

Keep the wound dry as this reduces the healing time, you may wish to purchase a limbo or seal tight. If necessary due to discharge levels clean the wound with tepid, previously boiled water. If infection is suspected a 5-minute saltwater foot bath is recommended and contact your podiatrist.

At your 7-day post-op appointment you will be given sterile self-adhesive dressings. If you need more of these you can purchase from SW Podiatry & Health Clinic or a local pharmacy. (5 x 7cm box of 50)

If the dressing does get wet or dirty change it immediately.

The wound takes several weeks to heal and does vary between individuals but should typically take 6-12 weeks. A scab forms towards the end of the healing and once it has completely scabbed over and is dry with no discharge for 2-3 days then you may leave the toe uncovered and bathe as normal. **Do not pick the scab off** – it will drop off on its own when ready.

Risks associated with minor nail surgery:

- Anaphylactic reaction to local anaesthetic - Very rare reaction – all podiatrists are trained to deal with medical emergencies.
- Infection – Every precaution is taken during the procedure to prevent an infection. However, because we are dealing with an open wound, it is inevitable that a small number of cases may develop an infection.
- Excessive bleeding – There is little to no bleeding during the procedure, however bleeding may occur afterwards.
- Pain following the operation – Once the local anaesthetic has worn off you may feel some pain or discomfort.
- Numbness – In a very small number of cases the nerve may be damaged by the needle. This numbness can last up to 3-4 months.
- Local anaesthetic – In rare instances the local anaesthetic is not effective and the operation will need to be rescheduled.
- Allergies – If you have ever had an allergic reaction or have felt unwell following a local anaesthetic; for example, after dental treatment, you may have an allergy (like a nut allergy). If you have had this type of reaction, please inform the podiatrist.
- Latex allergy/sensitivity – This can cause a skin reaction or affect your breathing. Please inform the podiatrist if you have skin sensitivity or are allergic to latex/rubber gloves.
- Anticoagulants - If you are taking warfarin as an anti-coagulant, we would expect your blood INR readings to be 2.5 or below. If this is not the case, we may have to delay your treatment and seek advice from your GP.
- Nail Regrowth – Nail surgery with Phenol has a very high success rate, but in a small amount of cases nail regrowth is possible.

If you experience any of the above or become concerned, please contact us on **07507163999** or email swclinic@outlook.com

If you need to contact someone about your procedure out of hours e.g. Minor Injuries Unit or your doctor please show them the post- operative leaflet, issued to you after nail surgery.

Price-

1 nail, 3 follow up appointments and all aftercare dressings - £380

2 nails, 3 follow up appointments and all aftercare dressings - £580

Updated April 2025