



Ingrown Toenails

An **ingrown toenail** digs into the skin next to the side of the nail. The most common site is the big toe. Other toes and even fingernails can be affected.



Signs & Symptoms

- Redness.
- Tenderness.
- Discomfort or pain.

Causes

- Jamming your toes.
- Wearing shoes or socks that fit too tight.
- Clipping toenails too short. The corners can penetrate the skin as the nail grows out.
- Having wider-than-average toenails.

Treatment

Self-care usually treats ingrown toenails. If this fails to work, a doctor or podiatrist may have to remove a portion of the nail.

Questions to Ask

Does the skin next to the side of your toenail show any signs of infection, such as pain, redness, tenderness, and/or pus?



NO

Flowchart continued in next column

With an ingrown toenail, do you have diabetes or circulation problems?

YES



Do you get ingrown toenails often?

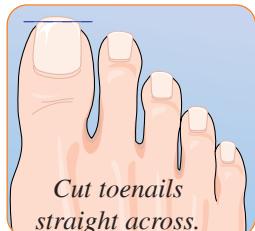


NO



Self-Care / Prevention

- Cut nails straight across. Don't cut the nails shorter at the sides than in the middle. {**Note:** If you have diabetes or circulation problems, follow your doctor's advice about clipping your toenails.}
- File the nails if they're sharp after clipping them.
- Wear shoes and socks that fit well.



To Treat an Ingrown Toenail

- Soak your foot in warm, soapy water for 5 to 10 minutes, 1 to 3 times a day.
- Gently lift the nail away from the reddened skin at the outer corners with the tip of a nail file.
- Soak a small piece of cotton in an antiseptic, such as Betadine. Place it just under the outer corners of the toenails, if you can.
- Repeat the previous 3 steps, daily, until the nail begins to grow correctly and pressure is relieved. Wear roomy shoes during this time.