

Compliments, comments & complaints

If you'd like to compliment, comment or complain about our service please contact our Customer Services Department:

Customer Services Department

Livewell Southwest
Room AF3, Local Care Centre
200 Mount Gould Road
Plymouth
PL4 7PY

Tel: 01752 435201

Email: customerservicespch@nhs.net

Contact details

The Minor Injuries Units are open every day of the year, including Bank Holidays.

Minor Injuries Unit Cumberland Centre

Damerel Close
Plymouth
PL1 4JZ

Tel: 01752 434390

Opening times: 8:30am - 9pm

Minor Injuries Unit South Hams Hospital

Plymouth Road
Kingsbridge
TQ7 1AT

Tel: 01548 852349

Opening times: 9am - 5pm

Minor Injuries Unit Tavistock Hospital

Spring Hill
Tavistock
PL19 8LD

Tel: 01822 612233

Opening times: 8am - 10pm

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Livewell Southwest



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Ingrowing Toenail Information



Minor Injuries Unit

Cumberland Centre
South Hams Hospital
Tavistock Hospital

This information leaflet is designed to help you manage your toenail problem at home.

What is an ingrowing toenail?

An ingrowing toenail is a common condition (especially in teenagers and young adults) which may cause discomfort or become infected. Various treatments can be given by a podiatrist.

What causes ingrowing toenails?

Usually there is no apparent reason why it occurs. Tight-fitting shoes may be a cause in some cases. Other causes are injury to nail, a fungal infection or certain medications. It is also more common in people who cut their toenails very short and round. The correct way of cutting nails is straight across, as over the page.

The practitioner may refer you to a podiatrist for persistent ingrowing toenails. The podiatrist may cut the nail under local anaesthetic to prevent reoccurrence.

What is the treatment for an ingrowing toenail?

Ingrowing toenails are usually treated by a podiatrist.

If caught early:

If the ingrowing part of the nail is small, it may be prevented from becoming worse, and sometimes cured, by the following. This treatment may be advised or given by the practitioner.

- Soak the toe in water for 10 minutes to soften the nail folds of skin around the affected nail.
- Then using a cotton wool bud, push the skin fold over the ingrown nail down and away from the nail. Do this starting at the root of the nail and move the cotton wool bud towards the end of the nail.
- Repeat each day for a few weeks, allowing the nail to grow.
- As the end of the nail grows forward, push a tiny piece of cotton wool under it to help the nail grow over the skin and not grow into it. Change cotton wool daily.
- Do not cut the nail but allow it to grow forward until it is clear of the end of the toe. Then cut it straight across and not rounded off at the end.

When to seek medical attention

See your General Practitioner or return to the MIU if you have symptoms of infection around the nail, particularly if you have diabetes, a poor immune system or other foot problems.

Symptoms of infection are:

- Increasing pain, swelling and redness near the ingrowing toenail, and pus (yellow or green fluid) near the nail or under the nearby skin.
- If the infection is getting worse, you may have throbbing (pulsating pain), redness spreading over the toe or a fever.
- Antibiotics may or may not be needed to treat infection. It can also help to soak your feet in warm salty water, then carefully dry and rest your feet.