

Redressing and aftercare

Leave the dressing in place until the morning after your surgery then replace it. It is safe and easy to care for your wound yourself and we will give you a starter pack of dressings as well as written instructions and tell you how to manage this when you have your surgery. If you feel that you cannot care for your own wound due to disability of other significant health issues you will need to contact your doctor's surgery to discuss it with them.

Ideally you should keep the dressing dry and redress the toe daily with a non-adherent dressing but you can change it less often as it heals. We will give you more information about aftercare when you come to your appointment.

Your toe will take approximately 4-8 weeks to heal depending on your age and general health. It will weep for several weeks and so require regular dressing changes. While the toe is healing you will need to wear roomy footwear and avoid trauma such as impact sports activities until your toe has healed.

Never leave an open wound exposed to the "air" to heal. Your chances of an infection will be dramatically increased and this will delay the healing process. If you think you have an infection, contact your GP Surgery.

What to do if there is a problem

In the unlikely event that you experience excessive pain, colour changes in your foot, prolonged numbness in the toe or excessive bleeding contact the Podiatry Service (see below).

If out of office hours you should contact your GP or their out of hours service or go directly to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E) such as at Derriford Hospital. Take this leaflet with you and make sure you give it to the person treating you.

Further information about the service and how to manage a range of foot health problems yourself, can also be found on our website:

www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry

Contact Details

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www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk

Podiatry Services Patient Information Leaflet



Advice About Toenail Avulsions

(September 2026)

Information for patients about nail surgery
procedures and aftercare

We support people to lead independent, healthy lives

Why are you having this minor surgical procedure?

Your podiatrist has recommended that you have a part or the whole of your toenail removed – this is called an avulsion. This may be because you have an ingrowing toenail, fungal infection or a painful, deformed nail and in your case this is the most effective treatment option.

How is the procedure done?

It will be necessary to numb the toe(s) by injecting a local anaesthetic into the base of the toe. This may sting or be uncomfortable but allows us to treat you without causing you any pain.

The Podiatrist will then remove the nail (or part of), and apply a chemical called Phenol to destroy the nail matrix (which produces the nail cells) to stop the nail from growing back. Your toe will then have a dressing put on it and you will be able to leave.

During the procedure a Podiatrist and a Podiatry Assistant will be present and you are welcome to have your partner, or a relative, friend or carer stay with you whilst you have your treatment which may take up to forty-five minutes but is often much quicker.

Possible risks

Patients are advised that as with all minor surgery there are risks. Your Podiatrist will have discussed these with you at your assessment appointment but to remind you these can be:

- the nail may grow back again,
- you may develop an infection whilst your wound heals,
- very rarely, prolonged or permanent numbness or nerve pain in the toe after the procedure,
- very rarely, an allergic reaction to the local anesthetic can occur,
- uncommonly, the chemical burn from the phenol used in your procedure may be excessive but will not cause any harm

Every effort will be made to ensure the best cosmetic result but when having only a part of the nail removed the remaining nail will be permanently narrower.

On the day

Please ensure both of your feet are clean and toenails are **not varnished**. Please also bring a list of your current medication with you and any inhaler or medication you take for conditions such as asthma or angina. You can eat your normal meals and drink (avoiding alcohol) before the procedure.

You will have a bulky dressing on your toe for the first 24-48 hours that will need to be accommodated in spacious footwear or open-toed sandals. Please bring such footwear with you to your appointment.

You are advised not to drive directly after the procedure as it will take several hours for the anesthetic to wear off, meaning your toe will remain numb and you may not be able to feel the driving pedals properly. This may affect your car insurance. It is also advisable to have someone accompany you home if at all possible.

What to do immediately after your treatment

You may go home shortly after your treatment is finished but you must make sure to rest for the remainder of the day. There is no need to have more time off work or school than this. Sit with your leg raised and supported and avoid your normal activities for the rest of the day.

Keep your dressing on and keep it dry

You are advised to avoid alcohol for the remainder of the day as this may encourage bleeding. If you do experience bleeding through the dressing do not be alarmed. Do not remove the dressing but do add some gauze on top of the dressing and compress your toe gently for five minutes whilst lying down with your leg raised and supported.

When the anesthetic wears off you may experience some minor discomfort; although many patients who have had a painful toe prior to surgery report that the toe is relatively painless afterwards. To relieve this you may wish to take your usual brand of pain relief such as that which you would take for a headache; but avoid products containing aspirin unless your doctor prescribes it for other reasons as a part of your normal medication, in which case you must continue to take it as prescribed. If in any doubt please ask a member of staff before leaving or consult your doctor or pharmacist.