

Wound Infections: What to Look For & What to Do

Pay attention for the signs of infection in your wound:

- increased pain at the site of the wound – but if you have neuropathy (loss of feeling) you may not feel any pain
- bright red skin around the wound area or dusky red streaks spreading up your toe into your foot or leg
- the area around the wound becomes much warmer or hot
- increased swelling
- discharge from the wound (pus or bleeding) which worsens or become a yellow/brown colour
- an unpleasant smell from the wound
- feeling generally unwell, feverish or a raised body temperature

If you are concerned about possible infection contact your doctor's surgery in the first instance – call them first. Out of hours, call NHS111 for help or use your GP's out of hours service.

IMPORTANT: If you have diabetes or have been told you have peripheral arterial disease, and think you may have an infection you **must** contact a health professional immediately.

Having a Problem with Your Wound or Dressing?

If you have any general problems, concerns or require further information please contact Podiatry Services:

Tel: 01752 434855 Email: livewell.podiatrypatients@nhs.net

Urgent Out of Hours Help and Advice

If your need is urgent or out of hours please contact the NHS 111 Service or use the online service: www.111.nhs.uk

Use NHS 111 if:

- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- you need health information or reassurance about what to do next

Podiatry Services Patient Information Leaflet



Caring For Your Nail Surgery Wound

(September 2026)

Advice for patients on looking after their wound

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

Caring For Your Wound

You can expect to be wearing a dressing on your nail surgery site for between four and eight weeks. During this time you will need to change the dressing on a regular basis. We will provide you with some dressings to get you doing after your procedure, until you can obtain your own to use – more information about that below.

How Often Should I Change My Dressing?

1. The Day After Your Surgery

The day after you have surgery you will need to replace the dressing with the smaller dressing we have given you.

2. Follow-up Dressings

From this point forward you can change your dressing as you feel it needs changing, usually because it has become uncomfortable or you have some fluid leaking through it. You will find that:

- In the first few weeks you need to change the dressing more frequently, perhaps every two to three days
- As time goes on you can leave replacing the dressing for longer
- There is no fixed rule but you should not leave a dressing in place for more than seven days

General Advice About Caring for Your Dressing

- Keep your dressing on and clean – don't go about barefooted
- Change the dressing when you need to, such as when it is soiled
- Keep your dressing dry – getting it wet will significantly increase the chance of the wound becoming infected
- If your dressing gets wet, replace it with a dry immediately
- Avoid covering the dressing with anything waterproof for more than a brief period to allow for bathing or showering
- If the wound bleeds, raise your foot as high as you can and put pressure on the wound for 5-10 minutes. If the bleeding will not stop, is profuse or prolonged, telephone NHS111 or visit MIU or A&E
- Keep pets and other animals away from your dressing
- Eat well and healthily, and keep warm – it all helps wounds to heal

How to Change Your Dressing

1. Wash your hands thoroughly in hot water and use plenty of liquid soap – be sure to wash the backs of your hands and your wrists
2. Dry your hands well with a clean towel
3. Remove your old dressing and place into the bin
4. Wash your toe with warm salty water. You can also soak it (for only a few minutes) using a clean bowl. Plenty of ordinary table salt is perfect for this and you can use previously boiled water **which has been allowed to cool**.
5. Gently pat your toe dry using either sterile gauze or a clean towel. Paper towels work just as well.
6. Now place your dressing over the wound and tape it in place – be careful not to fully wrap the tape around the toe
7. Now cover with the tubinette dressing if you are using it and secure with tape at the base of your toe. Alternatively cover with gauze and tape into place.

What Do I Use After I've Used Up The Dressings You Gave Me?

You'll need to get some dressings from a pharmacy as soon as you can after surgery. They can help and advise you, but you will need packs of:

- non-Adherent (NA) wound dressings
- either some tubinette, sometimes called tubigauze, or some packs of small ordinary square gauze
- some taping material such as micropore

These products are widely available and relatively cheap.

Coping With A Painful Wound

Most patients find that nail avulsion surgery sites are relatively painless and tend to ache and throb rather than hurt. But some people may get some pain. You may take painkillers such as the ones you would use for a headache if you need to. If you are not sure what to take ask a pharmacist, speak to your doctor or call NHS111 for some advice. Always read the label on painkiller medicines and never exceed the dose unless told to do so by a health professional. If you are already prescribed painkillers do not take more than your doctor has already told you to.