

Click to prove
you're human



An ingrown toenail can cause constant discomfort, making even simple activities feel unbearable. If you've undergone ingrown toenail surgery—or are considering it—you might be wondering what to expect during recovery. The good news? With proper care, recovery is straightforward and often quicker than many people imagine. This guide will walk you through the recovery timeline, dos and don'ts, tips for staying comfortable, and how to handle common post-surgery concerns. Seeking relief from an ingrown toenail? Contact The Hartland Podiatry Clinic for expert care. We specialise in both conventional and advanced incisional surgical techniques to address your needs. Call us at 01235 798313 or email info@thehartlandclinic.co.uk to book your appointment today. Understanding the recovery process can ease any worries you may have. Here's a breakdown of what you can expect:

- The First 24-48 Hours**Your toe may feel tender and slightly swollen, but this is normal. Some mild bleeding or oozing might occur—your doctor will likely provide a dressing to absorb this and protect the area. Keep your foot elevated as much as possible to reduce swelling and encourage healing.
- The First Week**By now, discomfort should start to ease. Over-the-counter pain relief, as recommended by your podiatrist, should suffice. Regular dressing changes and cleaning of the wound are vital to prevent infection. Your podiatrist will provide detailed instructions. Avoid wearing tight shoes; opt for open-toed sandals or roomy footwear instead.
- Two to Four Weeks Post-Surgery**Most patients are back to their regular activities by this point. However, strenuous exercise or putting excessive pressure on the toe might still be off-limits. If dissolvable stitches were used, they will disappear naturally, but check with your doctor during follow-ups.

DO Keep the surgical site clean and dry. Keep the surgical site clean and dry. Change dressings as instructed by your podiatrist. Elevate your foot regularly, especially in the first few days. Wear loose-fitting, breathable footwear. Attend all follow-up appointments to monitor healing. **DON'T** Ignore signs of infection, such as increased redness, warmth, or pus. Submerge your foot in water (e.g., baths, swimming) until cleared by your doctor. Resume high-impact activities too soon. Wear tight or narrow shoes that may press on the healing toe. Recovery doesn't have to be painful! Here are some tips to keep you comfortable:

Elevate Your Foot: Keeping your foot elevated, especially in the first few days, can minimise swelling and throbbing. **Use Pain Relievers:** Take prescribed or over-the-counter painkillers as recommended. **Protect the Area:** Use soft, padded dressings to shield the toe from accidental bumps or pressure. **Invest in Protective Footwear:** Consider post-surgery shoes designed to keep pressure off your toe while allowing you to move comfortably. It's normal to have a few questions about what's happening during recovery. Here's how to handle common concerns:

Lingering Redness or Sensitivity: Mild redness is typical in the first week, but if it worsens or becomes painful, contact your podiatrist. **Minor Oozing:** A small amount of discharge is common early on. However, persistent or foul-smelling discharge could indicate an infection. **Nail Growth Concerns:** If your nail starts growing back in an unusual way, inform your podiatrist during a follow-up visit. When in doubt, call us on 01235 798313 or email info@thehartlandclinic.co.uk for peace of mind. We understand that treating an ingrown toenail can feel daunting. The pain of an ingrown toenail is already difficult to bear, and it's natural to feel hesitant about letting anyone touch the area. That's why, at The Hartland Podiatry Clinic, our Consultant Podiatrist, Mr Paul Kirkland, leads a team dedicated to making every patient feel welcome, safe, and comfortable throughout their journey—before, during, and after their treatment or surgery. With extensive expertise in orthopaedics and minor surgery, our Consultant Podiatrist ensures that every procedure is carried out with the utmost precision and care. Our team uses the latest techniques to provide compassionate care, ensuring your experience is as painless and stress-free as possible. We're here to guide you every step of the way, ensuring a smooth and successful recovery. "I was a bit nervous going in, but Paul has a great bedside manner. He really put me at ease. Even through our masks, I could feel his calming demeanour. Very gentle, caring, and talented at what he does. I think the procedure took a little over an hour. I was in less pain after the procedure than I was pre-op. I've had my 4 check-ins and I'm healing up nicely! Rowena thank you so much for keeping me on task with my appointments. Luke thanks for your support during surgery. Paul, I appreciate your patience, grace, and talented hands. And if it's not apparent, I highly recommend this clinic." **Nail Health, Nail Disorders & Disease** Ingrown toenails are a common condition experienced by the young children and adults. This condition is termed as onychocryptosis or unguis incarnates. It leads to discomfort and pain while walking and can cause difficulty in performing day to day activities at school and work. Although it is a minor medical condition it can sometimes lead to painful inflammation of the toenail and the surrounding area. It is most commonly found in the big toe of men as compared to women due to their lifestyle and involvement in outdoor sports activities. (1) It occurs when a nail grows into the surrounding skin following trauma. This trauma can be caused by either wearing ill-fitting shoes, cutting nails at certain angles and also by hitting the foot onto a hard surface or object. A pre-existing fungal infection can lead to thickened or widened toenail that might lead to development of ingrown toenail. It is also thought to be running in families and if a member of a person's family has an ingrown toenail, there are chances of him developing the toenail ingrowth. An ingrown toenail can be managed at home and it is usually not necessary to visit an emergency room (ER) until unless the symptoms are worrisome i.e. extreme pain, swelling, pus collection, redness and odor at the affected site. This inflammation occurs as a result of increased blood supply to the toe. There is sometimes growth of new tissue over the toenail and it might resemble a granuloma. An unpleasant smell or odor is associated with it when there is bacterial infiltration present at the wound site. It is most common in athletes (especially in soccer players due to constant stubbing of the foot with the ball), obese people, diabetics, kidney and heart diseases that might lead to retention of water in the feet and cancer patients (suppressed immunity). (2) An ingrown toenail can be easily recognized by a close examination of the foot and a positive history of disabling symptoms. Sometimes additional tests are needed to be performed to rule out cellulitis that is a common complication of ingrown toenails. It is accompanied by fever and infection and deeper layers of the skin along the toe. (2) It is important to maintain good care of the feet by cutting toenails properly along the edges and not trim them very short. Very tight shoes should also be avoided and if somebody has sweaty feet it is advisable to wear footwear that is open or breathable to prevent infection. (1) Treatment mostly depends upon the severity of the symptoms and degree of inflammation. When the inflammation is mild and the toenail does not hurt much then soaking of the feet in warm water followed by application of antiseptic/anti-inflammatory creams or gel is beneficial. People who play outdoor sports should dry their feet properly before wearing shoes and should avoid any kind of pressure on the ingrown toenail. A foot specialist can advise use of splints or braces that help in free growth of the nails. Any medical condition that can aggravate symptoms should be addressed to the doctor to seek measures of prevention. When the toenail is severely inflamed then surgery is advised. This involves the removal of the toenail along with the inflamed tissue. The procedures done are partial nail avulsion or total nail avulsion. They are recommended when the conservative treatment is not helpful on relieving the symptoms and the foot remains inflamed. (2) The procedures must be carried out by a specialist as there is risk involved with removal of toenail. The extensor tendon can be injured and nerve damage might take place that will lead to restricted movement of the toe. In some cases profuse bleeding and improper healing of the wound might take place in immuno-compromised patients. Some people showed better result with cauterization of the of the nail matrix using phenol that completely prevents the ingrown toenail from returning. (1) -> References: Also Read: Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation. No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. We are part of Chiroprody.co.uk - We provide immediate access to a high quality, value for money bespoke podiatry service. Our podiatrists provide specialist treatments to meet the needs of individuals, case managers, solicitors, organisations, care homes, and sport teams. We are part of Chiroprody.co.uk - We provide immediate access to a high quality, value for money bespoke podiatry service. Our podiatrists provide specialist treatments to meet the needs of individuals, case managers, solicitors, organisations, care homes, and sport teams. What is it? Aftercare Prognosis Symptoms Alternative treatments Summary What are ingrown toenails? An ingrown toenail occurs when the top corner or side of your toenail grows into the flesh next to it. It happens most commonly on your big toe. Common causes of ingrown toenails include wearing shoes that are too tight around your toe, cutting your toenails too short or with too much of a curve, or toenail injury. Your toenail naturally grows into a curve. Many ingrown toenails can be successfully treated with home care. But if you have complications, such as a skin infection, or if you get a lot of ingrown toenails, surgery may help. People with diabetes or other conditions that affect the foot may be more likely to need surgery. Your doctor may recommend ingrown toenail surgery if at-home remedies don't resolve your ingrown toenail. You have recurring ingrown toenails you have another condition such as diabetes that makes complications more likely Part of your toenail or the full toenail may need to be removed, depending on your situation. To prepare you for surgery, your doctor will first clean and numb your toe with an anesthetic injection. This can be quite uncomfortable. A snug elastic band may be applied to the area near where your toe joins your foot. They may put a wedge under your nail to hold up the ingrown section. Once you're prepped, the doctor will use scissors and special tools to separate your toenail from the bed, making a vertical cut from the ingrown side down to the cuticle. They'll then remove the cut section. If necessary, the entire nail may be removed, particularly if both sides of your nail are ingrown. Your doctor will use either a heated electrical device called a cautery or an acidic solution such as phenol or trichloroacetic acid to disrupt the nail matrix from which your nail grows. This stops your nail from bleeding. It also means that section of your nail likely won't regrow. If it does regrow, your nail may look differently than it did before surgery. Finally, your doctor will typically apply a bandage covered with petroleum jelly to your toe. Ingrown toenails can be painful, especially if you press on or around the nail. Some people report that the anesthetic injection before surgery can be painful. But after the injection takes effect and the numbness sets in, you should be comfortable during the procedure. You might have pain after surgery once the numbing medication wears off. This is common and can be treated with over-the-counter pain relievers. If these don't work, talk to your doctor. For the first day or two after surgery, you should rest your foot and limit activity. Keep it elevated when you're sitting. Your doctor will give you wound care and follow-up instructions. Follow these closely. This will help prevent infection. If necessary, you can take over-the-counter pain relievers for discomfort. You might also be prescribed oral antibiotics if your toenail was already infected. Follow your doctor's instructions about how to take these. Wear open-toed or loose-fitting shoes for about two weeks after surgery. This gives your toe room to heal. After 24 hours, your toe can be kept clean by running warm soapy water over it and patting it dry. Keep it covered until fully healed with a nonstick dressing. You'll be able to return to normal activities after a few days, but avoid running and other strenuous activity for about two weeks. Ingrown toenail surgery is generally safe and effective. If you have a partial toenail removal, your nail may grow back in approximately three to four months. If you had your toenail totally removed, regrowth can take up to a year. The nail that grows back will be thinner than it was before. There's also a good chance that it won't grow back and your toenail bed will heal fine without it. However, there are potential complications, such as infection, which is possible after any surgery. Your doctor will give you wound care instructions to help prevent infection. While uncommon, it's also possible for the doctor to damage deeper parts of the nail bed during surgery. This could cause drainage and poor healing. Even after surgery, your toenail can become ingrown again. Sometimes this is because the new nail can grow in curved. An ingrown toenail can also come back if you continue wearing poorly fitting shoes, or if your toenail naturally grows in a curved direction. Common symptoms of ingrown toenails include: pain around your toenail edges buildup of fluid and thickening in the skin around your toenail redness and swelling around your toenail infection with draining pus around the toenail Surgery for ingrown toenails isn't always necessary. Before visiting your doctor, you can try these at-home treatments: Soak your foot in warm water several times a day for 15 to 20 minutes at a time. This can help reduce pain and swelling. Put a piece of a cotton ball or dental floss under the ingrown edge of your toenail. This may help it grow out properly. Take the cotton or floss out if it makes your pain worse or you see any signs of infection, such as pus. Carefully clip off the ingrown edge of the toenail if possible. Cover your ingrown toenail with an over-the-counter ointment, such as petroleum jelly, and a bandage. This will help keep your toenail clean and protected as it grows out. Wear comfortable, open-toed shoes or shoes and socks that give your toe plenty of room. This gives your toenail space to heal. Take over-the-counter pain relievers as necessary. Stop any at-home treatment and see your doctor if nothing improves after five days or if you experience: worsening pain fever discharge or bleeding from the area Surgery is an option if you have chronic ingrown toenails or have complications from an ingrown toenail. However, at-home remedies are often sufficient for resolving an ingrown toenail. If you do need surgery, it can be done in a doctor's office with local anesthesia. You may need to see a podiatrist or foot specialist. Complications of ingrown toenail surgery are rare. After several days of rest, you'll be able to return to normal activities. Ingrown Toe Nail Removal After Care Instructions. If you have undergone an ingrown toenail procedure, it is important to follow these patient instructions for proper care and healing: Keep the area clean: Gently clean the affected toe with mild soap and warm water daily. Use a soft washcloth or cotton ball to carefully clean around the nail and remove any debris or crusting. Rinse the area thoroughly and pat it dry with a clean towel. Apply an antibiotic ointment: After cleaning, apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment to the affected area. This helps prevent infection and promotes healing. Follow the instructions provided by your healthcare provider or pharmacist regarding the frequency and duration of application. Dress the toe: Cover the toe with a sterile non-stick dressing or sterile gauze pad. Secure the dressing in place with medical tape or an adhesive bandage. Change the dressing daily or as directed by your healthcare provider, especially if it becomes wet, soiled, or loosened. Wear open-toed or loose-fitting shoes: Opt for open-toed shoes or those with a wide toe box to avoid putting pressure on the affected toe. Tight or narrow shoes can aggravate the area and delay healing. If necessary, you can wear sandals or loose-fitting shoes until the toe has fully healed. Soak the toe: Your healthcare provider may recommend soaking your toe in warm water a few times a day. This can help reduce swelling, promote drainage, and aid in healing. Add a mild antiseptic solution, such as diluted hydrogen peroxide or Epsom salt, to the warm water if advised by your healthcare provider. Elevate your foot: Whenever possible, elevate your foot to reduce swelling. Prop it up on a pillow or cushion while sitting or lying down. This helps improve circulation and speeds up the healing process. Take pain medication if necessary: Over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help manage any discomfort or pain you might experience. Follow the recommended dosage instructions on the packaging or consult with your healthcare provider for guidance. Avoid trimming the nail: Do not attempt to trim or cut the affected nail yourself until it has fully healed. Allow your healthcare provider to manage the nail during follow-up visits. Follow-up appointments: Keep all scheduled follow-up appointments with your healthcare provider. They will assess the healing progress, remove any sutures if necessary, and provide further instructions for care. Watch for signs of infection: Keep an eye out for signs of infection, such as increasing pain, redness, swelling, warmth, pus, or a foul odor. If you notice any of these signs, or if you have a fever, contact your healthcare provider immediately. It is important to remember that these instructions are general guidelines. Your healthcare provider may provide specific instructions based on your individual case and the type of ingrown toenail procedure performed. If you have any concerns or questions during the healing process, do not hesitate to reach out to your healthcare provider for guidance and support. Many Surgical Procedures are available for correcting ingrown toenails, thick toenails, or traumatic/painful toenails. Many of these procedures are temporary, and the original problem can recur. The procedure performed on your toenail is permanent, so the nail or side of the nail removed should not grow back. The medication used to prevent nail growth causes a chemical burn on the skin around the nail matrix and nail plate. The skin will turn red, and the nail bed will drain clear/yellow serous fluid. This is normal for the procedure. The toe may even look infected, but it is not. This is the skin's reaction to the medication; however, if the drainage is thick and creamy, has a foul odor, or redness starts to go up the toe and into the foot, call the office immediately at (813)502-5904. If it is after hours, follow the after-hour prompts to contact the doctor on call.