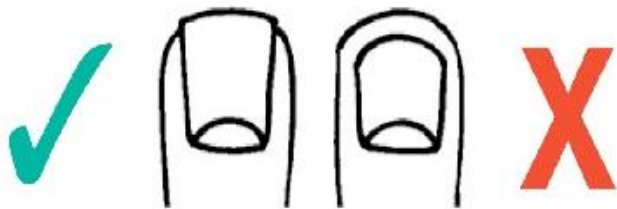


Diabetes Nail Care Advice

In general people with diabetes can cut their own toenails. If you have diabetes you should keep your nails healthy by following the advice below. Remember your nails are there to protect your toes.

Toenail cutting

- Cut your nails after bathing/showering, when they are softer and easier to manage. If you find that bending to reach your feet is difficult, then please ask a member of your family or a carer to help you.
- Using scissors or clippers, cut the nails straight across without making them too short. The corners should be long enough so that you can see and touch them. If too short, the sides of the nails will become embedded behind the flesh and become painful.



- After cutting your nails, you may need to gently file any rough edges with a nail file or emery board.
- Avoid picking or cutting down the sides of the nail or delving with any sharp implement, as this may damage the nail/skin and lead to infection.
- If your nails are thick or you find cutting your nails difficult, then file them on a weekly basis. Do this when the nails are dry i.e. before bathing/showering. Use a downward filing motion as shown in the diagram below.



Common Nail Problems

If it is difficult for you to care for your nails, you should seek help from a podiatrist.



Involuted Toenail

This type of nail is overly curved from side to side. The most severe cases are called 'pincer' nails and this is where both sides of the nail curve towards each other. The shape of the nail may be inherited, but it can be influenced by trauma and/or shoe pressure. It is important to keep this type of nail longer in length and not to trim down at the sides, in order to avoid it becoming ingrown.

Ingrowing Toenail

An ingrowing toenail occurs when part of the nail penetrates the skin, often resulting in infection. The severity of its appearance will vary from mild redness at the side of the nail, to gross swelling of the toe with the development of 'proud flesh' (granulation tissue which is comprised of new connective tissue and tiny blood vessels that form on the surfaces of a wound during the healing process), bleeding and discharge of pus. An ingrowing toenail will require treatment from a podiatrist.

Common causes of ingrowing nails include:

- Cutting the nails too short - allowing the corners to become embedded
- Picking the nails - resulting in sharp edges or spikes penetrating the flesh
- Pressure from ill-fitting footwear - pushing the skin against the side of the nail
- From direct injury - when playing sports for example

Further information

If you require any further information, or wish to discuss your treatment with a member of staff, please call the podiatry administration team on 0191 445 8401

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website (<https://www.qegateshead.nhs.uk/fairprocessing>) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net.

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request

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