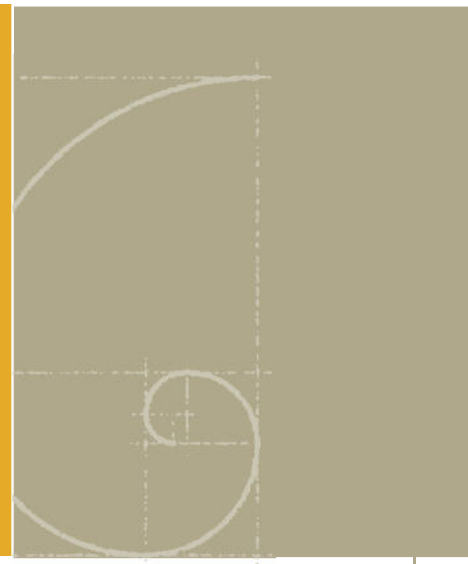
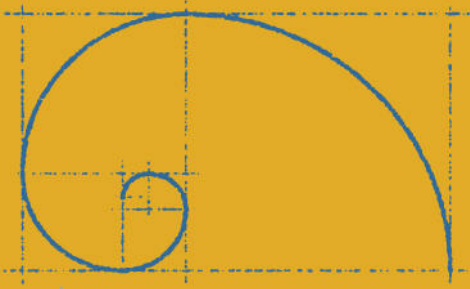


Ingrown Toenails



What are they?

Toenails help to protect the sensitive tissues in our toes, but can cause severe pain if they cut into the toes. The feet endure a lot of stresses and strains with walking, running, wearing shoes, working and playing sport. Sometimes the whole nail or just a portion of it will grow into the skin and penetrate the skin's surface. This problem commonly occurs on the big toe, however, smaller toes can be affected.

What causes them?

There are a number of reasons why ingrown toenails occur. These include:

- i. Improper cutting*
Nails should be cut along the contour of the toe or straight across. Don't cut down the sides. Don't pick at toe nails.
- ii. Poor fitting footwear*
Tight or short shoes restrict room for nail growth with resultant pressure on the nails which can lead to ingrown nails.
- iii. Incurvated nails*
Sometimes the nail edge curves into the skin either due to trauma or an inherited disorder.

iv. Chubby toes

People with chubby toes will find the skin at the side of the toe is more likely to be traumatised or pierced by the nail as it grows straight out.

In summary, the cause may be inherited or due to poor cutting, trauma.

How is it treated?

The problem may be treated conservatively by proper cutting and advice from the podiatrist. The podiatrist will instruct you on how to manage the nails in order to prevent recurrence of the ingrown toenails. If conservative treatment fails to provide a cure, surgery may then be considered.

Surgical correction of an ingrown toenail is very simple and very successful. In most cases only a small portion of the nail is removed.

If this type of correction is required, your podiatrist will advise you and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.