

Prior to Nail Surgery

Patient and Carer Information

Podiatry Service



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<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

Author ID:	Podiatry Service
Leaflet Ref:	CM 112
Version:	4
Leaflet title:	Prior to Nail Surgery
Last review:	January 2023
Expiry Date:	January 2025



Introduction

You have been referred for nail surgery – that is removal of the whole or part of a toenail - with a view to a long term and permanent solution to your nail problem. This leaflet is designed to answer the queries you may have about the procedure and also give the advice you will need prior to your surgery.

Will it hurt

A local anaesthetic (painkiller) is given so that the procedure should be pain free. It is similar to having an injection in your mouth at the dentist before you have a filling. Your toe will be tested to make sure it is “numb” before your surgery.

How long will I be waiting for an appointment

You will receive an appointment as soon as possible. You may be offered a cancellation if you can attend at short notice.

Please inform the Podiatrist if you have any holidays due, or if you know you will be unable to attend at any time within the next 3 months. This is to ensure an uninterrupted course of treatment.

What about eating

The anaesthetic is given into the base of your toe to make it numb - that is why it is called a ‘local anaesthetic’. There is no need to fast (miss meals). Please have your normal meals before your surgery.

How long will it take for my surgery

You will be in the clinic for approximately three quarters of an hour to an hour depending on the type of operation needed. The operation itself only takes around 5 – 10 minutes.

What about work/school?

Please take the day off for your surgery. The following day you may return to work or school.

Where will the surgery be carried out?

Surgery is carried out in the Podiatry Department at Ince Community Centre, Platt Bridge Health Centre or at Leigh Health Centre.

Can I go home afterwards?

Yes – in order to minimise pain and bleeding, you must go straight home afterwards and rest with your foot/ feet up.

Can I drive?

You should not drive yourself or walk home or take public transport. This is because **legally** you are considered to be unfit to drive. Also you may injure your toe or cause more bleeding. Therefore **please arrange accompanied transport home**. Do not go home on a bus, motorbike or cycle. You may drive the day after your surgery.

What type of footwear is needed?

You are advised to wear full shoes/trainers/slippers/sliders/sandals to go home in. Do not come in sandals in the winter months or if the weather is cold/wet.

In cold weather or if your feet are cold, you should also wear socks. Cold feet could mean you cannot have surgery since your toe may not heal properly.

Definitely no high heels or court shoes, please!

Will my toe bleed?

There is not usually much or continued bleeding after surgery. Appropriate dressings will have been applied to your toe after your surgery. When you have had your surgery, you are advised to rest with your foot/ feet and leg/ legs elevated to help reduce bleeding and discomfort. The day after surgery you will no longer need to keep your foot/leg elevated.

Will my toe be sore after surgery?

You may have some discomfort such as throbbing, similar to toothache. This is not normally severe and does not generally continue for long. The pain is usually no worse than the pain you may have had already from your toenail problem.

You may take painkilling tablets (or liquids for children) if needed. Please ensure that you always follow the manufacturers' instructions with regard to the correct dose to take.

What happens after surgery?

You must attend for a check-up within a few days of having your toenail surgery. This is to make sure that your toe is healing properly. We will arrange further dressings depending on how your toe is healing.

The Podiatrist will inform you which dressings are required, when you will need to re-dress your toe and how to do this. You should be able to do your own dressings. There is no need to see the District Nurses or the Practice Nurse at your doctor's surgery.

You will need to re-dress your toe until it has healed completely. On average healing will take five to seven weeks following partial nail removal and around 8 - 10 weeks if the whole nail has been removed. Please note that healing time may be longer or shorter – it is different for each person.

You should not do any sport, including swimming, until your toe is completely better. To reduce the risk of infection, you **must** keep your toe dry when having a bath or shower.

Alcohol

Please do not drink alcohol 24 hours prior to your surgery or on the day of your surgery, as alcohol affects bleeding and also the healing time.

Smoking

Smoking affects healing and your health and is not recommended at any time. However if you are a smoker, please do not smoke on the day before, the day of, and the day after your surgery.

Will the nail regrow?

A chemical is used to destroy the nail matrix (that is where the nail grows from) so that the nail should not grow again. In a few cases the nail may grow back – either fully or partially or it may be distorted/ thickened.

What if the nail does regrow?

You may be referred for further assessment in the Podiatry Department. Treatment will be given as necessary, but further nail surgery is not always needed.

Treatment of patients under the age of 16

A parent who has parental responsibility or a legal guardian **must** attend appointments with patients who are under the age of 16 years.

How big will the dressing be?

It is usually a simple sterile dressing and 'finger' type bandage that does not take up much room in your shoe. Extra thickness may be applied on the day of your surgery. It is important to wear footwear that is the correct size and style to help your toe to heal after surgery.

Other information

Please make sure that nail varnish is removed completely from your toenails before attending for nail surgery.

A special cream may be used prior to surgery to help make your toe a little more numb before you have the anaesthetic injection. The podiatrist will give you more details about this on request. You should also follow the manufacturer's instructions for use of the product.

You may wish to bring a book, magazine, hand-held game or phone/tablet with you to use during your surgery appointment.

Useful information

Should you have any queries or need further advice, please contact:

Chiropody/Podiatry Nail Surgery Department

Leigh Health Centre

The Avenue

Leigh

WN7 1HR

Telephone: 03007077700

NHS Direct - 24 hour advice and health information service Telephone 0845 46 47

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan
WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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