



**DES MOINES
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS, P.C.**

DMOS – West
6001 Westown Parkway
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515-224-1414
800-245-6129

DMOS – East
Penn Medical Plaza
1301 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 213
Des Moines, IA 50316
515-263-9696
800-688-3980

DMOS – Carroll
405 S. Clark St., Suite 250
Carroll, IA 51404
712-792-2093
877-284-1428

Ingrown Toenails

R.D. Lee Evans, DPM, FACFAS

Des Moines Orthopaedic Surgeons

Although not thought of as a sports related injury, ingrown toenails can be a source of significant disability when trying to participate in sports. Ingrown toenails can occur at any age but have greater incidence in adolescents.

Cutting the nails too short, wearing ill fitted shoes, or rounding off the toenail corners when trimming are all common causes of ingrown toenails. In the case of athletics: trauma, such as kicking a ball or being stepped on are also common causes of ingrown toenails. Another toenail condition of trauma is tearing part of the toenail. Subungual hematoma, a collection of blood under the nail, is another cause of toenail pain.

In the case of nail trauma, trimming the loose toenail is important to keep the toenail from getting caught on socks and shoes. Additionally, keeping the exposed tissue clean by washing with antibacterial soap and applying antibiotic cream to keep the toe from becoming infected. Subungual hematomas can be left in place unless pressure develops under the nail. If pressure develops under the nail, a small hole in the nail is placed to relieve the pressure and allow the blood to escape from the under side of the nail.

Symptoms of ingrown toenail consist of pain around the toenail, redness, swelling, thickness of the skin around the nail and possibly drainage. In the case of infected ingrown toenails, antibiotics may be prescribed to eradicate the infection. However, many times the toenail will still be ingrown or pushing against the proud flesh and require treatment.

Common medical treatment for an ingrown toenail would consist of numbing the toe with local anesthetic and removing an offending border and any infected tissue. This would be followed by soaking the toe in Epsom salt water or antibacterial soap. Epsom salt should not be confused with table salt. Table salt would be a source increased pain whereas soaking in Epsom salts would draw drainage from the toenail and is generally soothing.

Athletic activity is usually possible the same day after an ingrown toenail removal unless significant infection is present. In some cases where repeated ingrown toenails occur, permanent toenail border removal is necessary to cure the condition. Permanent toenail border removal or matrixectomy is also not particularly debilitating and athletic activity is allowed to resume within one to two days.



**DES MOINES
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS, P.C.**

DMOS – West

6001 Westown Parkway
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515-224-1414
800-245-6129

DMOS – East

Penn Medical Plaza
1301 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 213
Des Moines, IA 50316
515-263-9696
800-688-3980

DMOS – Carroll

405 S. Clark St., Suite 250
Carroll, IA 51404
712-792-2093
877-284-1428

The best way to treat an ingrown toenail is to not get one in the first place. Prevention of ingrown toenails is accomplished by good foot health: including good foot hygiene (regular washing of the feet and cleaning on debris from around the nail), trimming toenails properly, avoid tight fitting shoes, and regular foot inspection.

Dr. Evans is a Board Certified Podiatrist that practices at Des Moines Orthopaedic Surgeons. He is located at DMOS – West and offers satellite clinic services at DMOS – East, Urbandale Family Physicians and the Wound Healing Center in Des Moines. To reach Dr. Evans or to schedule an appointment please call 515-224-5224.