

Instructions for redressing toes following toenail surgery

Following Your Toenail Surgery

Your toe(s) need redressing regularly. This is to aid healing and to help reduce the risk of infection. The wound(s) can take approximately 4 to 8 weeks to fully heal if part of the nail has been removed and usually a few weeks longer if the whole of the nail has been removed. Whilst healing, the dressing(s) need to be changed regularly by you or by a relative or carer. At your surgery follow up appointment, the podiatrist will demonstrate how to redress the toe(s)

How frequently should you redress the toe(s)

For approximately the first two weeks it is recommended that you redress the wound on your toe once a day, then less frequently until healed e.g. every second or third day. However if the wound weeps through the dressing it is advised that you change it as soon as possible.

Before you start

Wash your hands thoroughly, ideally with liquid soap and dry them thoroughly with paper towel.

Remove the dressing from the toe

This should be done carefully to avoid trauma to the wound. If the dressing is stuck to the toe it may need to be soaked off in salt water (see below). Discharge on the dressing is part of normal healing. **Increased discharge and increased pain/redness/odour etc. are signs the toe is infected and you should contact your GP surgery as antibiotics may be required.**

Soak the toe in salt water

Pour a kettle full of boiled water into a clean bowl. Add half a cup of salt which will dissolve whilst you allow the water to cool. Always test the water to make sure it is not too hot and then bathe the toe in the salt water solution for about 3 to 4 minutes. Next place the foot on a clean towel and allow it to dry naturally. Avoid touching the toe as much as possible.

Redressing the toe

As advised, before you had your surgery, you should have purchased suitable dressings. The current recommendation is **Mepore 6 x 7cm or similar (e.g. Softpore 6 x 7cm)**. Once the toe has dried, simply apply a dressing so the pad covers the wound. Some extra tape might be required to secure the dressing depending on how well it sticks to your skin. **If the dressing becomes wet or soiled then repeat the above process**

To aid healing

It is advised that you keep the dressing(s) dry when having a bath or shower to reduce the risk of infection. There are devices available from pharmacies or online which can make this easier, such as Limbo or SealTight foot and ankle wound protectors. Normal showering or bathing (including swimming) can be resumed once the toe has healed. When removing a dressing be sure to inspect if there is any discharge on it.

If there is no discharge on a dressing two days in a row and a black scab has formed over the wound then normal showering and bathing can be resumed. You no longer need to salt water bathe the toe(s) and dressings no longer need to be applied. Eventually the scab will fall away naturally when healing is complete.

Contact us

Remember the toe(s) might take several weeks to heal but if you have concerns that it is not healing properly your referral will remain open for three months so that you can request a further review (see Podiatry office details below).

Sources of information

- Podiatry central booking office, Tel. 0300 131 4536 available Mon to Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm or Email: esh-tr.podiatryenquiries@nhs.net
- Podiatry page on Trust's website www.esht.nhs.uk/service/podiatry
- College of Podiatry website <https://cop.org.uk>

Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 13 14 500 Ext: 135860 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department. Tel: 0300 13 14 500

After reading this information if you any questions please ask your podiatrist

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information: East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust podiatrists and assistants: N Bassett, E Diplock, D Gardner, M Grant, S Hart, A Hatton, S Holborow, H Miyir, M Morehen, H Poppitt-Jones, S Ralph, L Rooney

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Podiatry Team, Out of Hospital Division

Next review date: October 2022

Responsible clinician/author: Jeffrey Wells, Lead Podiatrist for Minor Surgery.