



TUAN A. TRAN M.D., M.B.A, F.A.C.S.

Diplomate American Board of Plastic Surgery, Diplomate American Board of Surgery

General Surgery, Reconstructive Surgery, Aesthetic Surgery, Plastic and Hand Surgery

Surgical Nail Removal Post-Operative Instructions

Overview

Surgical nail removal can be done for severe or returning fungal nail infections. The nail can be entirely or partially removed in office. Local anesthesia is injected to the finger or toe to prevent pain. Dr. Tran will then loosen the skin around the nail and separate it from the skin using a tool under the nail. If only part of the nail is diseased, only the diseased part is removed.

If you want to avoid future infection by preventing the nail from growing back, Dr. Tran can destroy the nail matrix. This is accomplished by applying a chemical to the cuticle area after the nail plate is removed. An ointment is applied to the wound, which is then covered with gauze and tape.

Benefits

Nail removal makes it possible to apply an antifungal cream directly to the infected area, increasing the likelihood that the infection can be cured. For a chronically severe fungal nail infection, you can choose to have the nail matrix destroyed during the removal procedure. This treatment prevents a diseased or disfigured nail from growing back.

Before Your Procedure

- Shower the night before or the morning of your procedure. You can eat and take all of your medications as usual.
- Buy bandages that are made specifically for fingers. You will need to use these after your procedure. You can buy them at your local drug store.
- If you're driving to your appointment, bring someone who can drive you home after your procedure.

After Surgery

Care for your wound as instructed by Dr. Tran. As a reminder, you may follow this general advice:

- After the first 24 to 48 hours, wash around the wound with clean water 2 times a day. Don't use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol, which can slow healing.
- You may cover the wound with a thin layer of petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline, and a non-stick bandage.
- Apply more petroleum jelly and replace the bandage as needed. (Follow instructions on changing bandage below).
- The infection can be further treated by applying an antifungal cream to the remaining infected area or by taking oral antifungal medicine if prescribed by Dr. Tran.
- The wound should heal within a few weeks. Fingernails may take 6 months to grow back, and toenails may take 12 to 18 months to grow back.



TUAN A. TRAN M.D., M.B.A, F.A.C.S.

Diplomate American Board of Plastic Surgery, Diplomate American Board of Surgery

General Surgery, Reconstructive Surgery, Aesthetic Surgery, Plastic and Hand Surgery

Changing your bandage

Change your bandage 24-48 hours after your procedure. Follow these steps:

- Soak your affected finger in lukewarm water for 15 minutes. This helps keep your bandage from sticking to your wound.
- Gently take the bandage off.
- Wash your wound with soap and water. Pat it dry with clean gauze.
- Check for blue or purple discoloration or redness. If you see any discoloration or redness, please call our office.
- Apply an antifungal cream to the remaining infected area and cover it with a new bandage. Keep the tip of your finger open to the air so that you can keep checking for discoloration or redness.
- Change your bandage once or twice a day until your wound is healed. This usually takes 5 to 7 days.

Follow-up Visit

At your pre-operative appointment, our office staff will schedule your post-operative visit within 5-7 days following the operation. At this appointment, Dr. Tran will check-up on your recovery and provide you with further instructions of care as needed.

Possible Problems/Emergency

If you develop any symptoms such as fevers with temperature greater than 101.5 F, chills, persistent nausea and vomiting, inability to urinate, persistent numbness/tingling of fingers, or any increasing pain not controlled with medications, please contact our office at 714-839-8000 between the hours of 9AM-6PM on Monday-Thursday and 9AM-1PM on Friday; or you may reach us at 714-860-3588 after hours. If you are unable to reach your surgeon or a member of his staff, go to the Emergency Room closest to you.

References:

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (2018). *Patient & caregiver education: About your nail procedure*. Retrieved from <https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/patient-education/about-your-nail-procedure>

My Health Alberta. (2019). *Surgical nail removal for fungal nail infections*. Retrieved from <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=hw268840>