



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# About Your Nail Avulsion

This information will help you prepare for your nail avulsion procedure.

Some anticancer treatments can cause changes to finger and toenails, including redness, swelling, oozing, pain, infection, and odor. These treatments include:

- Taxanes, such as:
  - Docetaxel (Taxotere®)
  - Paclitaxel (Taxol®)
- Targeted therapies, such as:
  - Cetuximab (Erbix®)
  - Erlotinib (Tarceva®)
  - Gefitinib (Iressa®)
  - Lapatinib (Tykerb®)
  - Panitumumab (Vectibix®)

Some nail problems can be treated with topical antibiotics (rubbed on the skin), oral antibiotics (taken by mouth), or chemical cauterization (destroying the damaged tissue with chemicals). If these treatments don't work or the problem gets worse, you may need to have a nail avulsion. Nail avulsion is an in-office procedure in which the nail plate (hard part of your nail) is removed from your affected finger or toenail. A nail avulsion can also be done to:

- Treat infections of the nail
- Remove growths from the nail
- Treat severe injuries to the nail
- Treat ingrown toenails
- Biopsy the skin under the nail

## ■ Before Your Procedure

Tell your doctor if:

- You are taking:
  - Any medication to thin your blood, such as aspirin, aspirin/extended-release dipyridamole (Aggrenox®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), dabigatran (Pradaxa®), enoxaparin (Lovenox®), rivaroxaban (Xarelto®), or warfarin (Coumadin®)

- Any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®)
- You are allergic to:
  - Anesthesia
  - Latex
  - Tape adhesive
  - Bacitracin
  - Iodine/chlorhexidine
- You have:
  - Had a lymph node dissection on your affected arm or leg
  - Had joint replacement within the past 3 months
  - A low platelet count or a bleeding disorder
  - Hepatitis or any other infectious diseases
  - A pacemaker or an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD)
  - Diabetes

You may also want to buy bandages that are made specifically for fingers or toes at a drug store. You will need to use these after your procedure.

## ■ The Day of Your Procedure

- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not wear gloves or tight shoes.
- Take all of your usual medications.
- Eat your regular meals.
- Shower the night before or the morning of your procedure.

## ■ During Your Procedure

- You will receive local anesthesia to the affected nail(s) 5 to 10 minutes before the procedure begins. This will numb the area.
- Your doctor will remove a piece of the nail or the whole nail.

## ■ After Your Procedure

- A topical antibiotic ointment and dressing will be placed on your wound. Keep the dressing on and dry for 24 hours after your procedure.
- It is normal to feel numbness in the affected area for 1 to 2 hours after your procedure.
- You may experience throbbing, pain, swelling, bleeding, discharge, or sensitivity at the affected area after your procedure. If your doctor approves, you can take regular or extra-strength acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for any discomfort.

- For the first 48 hours after your procedure, elevate your affected arm or leg as high as possible to decrease swelling and pain.
- If you have any bleeding, press firmly on your wound with a clean gauze pad for 15 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop, repeat this step. If the bleeding still hasn't stopped after repeating this step, call your nurse.
- Do not swim or do any strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks after your procedure.
- It takes about 6 months to regrow a fingernail and about 1 year to regrow a toenail. The new nails usually look normal.

## Changing Your Dressing

You will need to change your dressing 24 hours after your procedure.

- First, soak your finger or toe in lukewarm water for 15 minutes. This will prevent any discomfort from your dressing sticking to your wound. Then, remove the dressing.
- Wash your wound with soap and water and pat it dry with clean gauze.
- Apply \_\_\_\_\_ ointment to the wound and cover it with a new dressing. Keep the tip of your finger or toe open to the air so that you can check for any blue or purple discoloration or redness.
- Change your dressing once or twice a day until your nail plate is healed. This usually takes 5 to 7 days.

## ■ Call Your Doctor if You Have:

- A temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Any of the following symptoms at your wound or the area around it:
  - Increased redness and swelling or warmth at the tip of your finger or toe
  - Blue or purple discoloration of the tip of your finger or toe
  - Increased pain or discomfort
  - Bright yellow or green drainage
  - Persisting or worsening odor
  - Bleeding that does not stop after applying pressure
- Any questions or unexpected problems

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at \_\_\_\_\_. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call \_\_\_\_\_. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.