



QUALITYPODIATRYGROUP

**NAIL CARE
FOR SENIORS:
MORE THAN
JUST
NAIL CUTTING**



Nail care may not always take center stage in discussions about senior health, but it plays a crucial role in overall well-being. Proper nail maintenance is far more than a cosmetic concern for seniors—it's an essential aspect of personal hygiene and health. From preventing infections to ensuring mobility, nail care can significantly impact your patient's/resident's quality of life. This blog will explore the importance of trimming nails correctly, when to seek podiatric professional help, and tips for maintaining healthy nails.

The Importance of Proper Nail Care for Seniors

As we age, our nails undergo changes. They often become thicker, more brittle, and prone to conditions like fungal infections. These changes can make nail care more challenging and increase the risk of complications such as ingrown nails, infections, and discomfort when wearing shoes.

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Preventing Ingrown Nails in Long-Term Care Facilities

Ingrown nails occur when the edges or corners of a nail grow into the surrounding skin. While this condition can affect anyone, seniors are particularly susceptible due to decreased dexterity, poor vision, or underlying health issues like diabetes. Left untreated, ingrown nails can lead to pain, swelling, and even serious infections. Proper nail trimming is key to preventing ingrown nails for seniors.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

Cut nails straight across: Avoid rounding the edges, which can encourage the nail to grow into the skin.

Don't cut nails too short: Leave a small amount of white at the tip to reduce pressure on the nail bed.

Use proper tools: Invest in high-quality nail clippers and ensure they are cleaned before and after use.

REDUCING THE RISK OF TOENAIL INFECTIONS

Thickened nails, fungal infections, and cuts caused by improper trimming can all lead to bacterial or fungal infections. For seniors with compromised immune systems or conditions like diabetes, even minor infections can escalate quickly.

Regular nail care reduces the likelihood of infections. Washing feet and hands thoroughly, keeping nails dry, and moisturizing the surrounding skin can further protect against bacteria and fungi.



When to Seek Professional Podiatric Help

There are times when at-home nail care isn't sufficient or safe. Knowing when to seek help from a healthcare provider or podiatrist can prevent complications and ensure proper treatment.

SIGNS YOU NEED PROFESSIONAL PODIATRIC CARE

- 1. Thickened or Discolored Nails:** These may indicate a fungal infection or other underlying condition that requires medical treatment.
- 2. Persistent Pain or Swelling:** Ingrown nails or infections can lead to ongoing discomfort that needs professional attention.
- 3. Bleeding or Open Wounds:** Any cuts or wounds around the nails that don't heal quickly could be a sign of infection.
- 4. Difficulty Trimming Nails:** Professional care ensures nail trimming is safe for seniors with arthritis, poor vision, or limited mobility.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PODIATRIST FOR YOUR FACILITY IN ILLINOIS AND FLORIDA

A podiatrist specializes in foot and nail care and is an excellent choice for seniors experiencing issues like ingrown nails, infections, or fungal conditions. For those with diabetes, it's essential to consult a podiatrist regularly. Diabetes increases the risk of foot complications, and professional care can help prevent serious issues like ulcers or infections.

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6 Tips for Maintaining Healthy Toenails

Healthy nails are not only a sign of good grooming but also an indicator of overall health. Here are some practical tips for seniors to maintain strong, healthy nails:

1. PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

Wash hands and feet daily with mild soap and warm water. Dry thoroughly, especially between the toes, to prevent fungal infections.

2. MOISTURIZE REGULARLY

Dry skin around the nails can crack and become a breeding ground for bacteria. To reduce the risk of fungal growth, use a non-greasy moisturizer on the hands, feet, and nails daily. Avoid applying lotion between the toes.

3. WEAR COMFORTABLE FOOTWEAR

Shoes that are too tight can cause pressure on the nails, leading to discomfort and ingrown nails. Choose well-fitted shoes with adequate toe room and consider orthotic insoles if needed.

4. STAY HYDRATED AND EAT A BALANCED DIET

Hydration and proper nutrition are vital for nail health. Include foods rich in biotin, zinc, and omega-3 fatty acids, which promote strong nails. Leafy greens, nuts, and fish are excellent choices.

5. AVOID HARSH CHEMICALS

Exposure to harsh cleaning agents or frequent use of nail polish can weaken nails. Always wear gloves when cleaning and opt for nail polish and removers free of harmful chemicals like formaldehyde or acetone.

6. SCHEDULE REGULAR NAIL CHECKS

Regularly inspect nails for any changes in color, thickness, or texture. Early detection of fungal infections or ingrown nails can prevent more serious complications.



Prioritizing Nailcare is an Investment in Quality of Life

Nail care for seniors goes far beyond toenail cutting—it's a critical component of overall health and well-being. Proper trimming techniques can prevent painful conditions like ingrown nails, while professional help ensures safe care for those with additional challenges. By adopting good hygiene practices, moisturizing regularly, and maintaining a nutrient-rich diet, seniors can keep their nails healthy and strong.

Caring for nails might seem like a small task, but its impact on comfort, mobility, and health is immense. For seniors, prioritizing nail care is an investment in maintaining independence and a high quality of life. Podiatrists are important members of the multidisciplinary wound care team in assisted living and nursing homes, as they can help prevent amputation and improve the health of residents. As trained healthcare professionals, podiatrists who visit long term care facilities can identify ulcerations, perform lower extremity exams, examine patients from four key perspectives: vascular, dermatologic, orthopedic, and neurological, assess fall risk and maintain foot and lower limb health.

Our expert podiatrists at [Quality Podiatry Group](#) can help train your staff about the importance of proper nailcare and demonstrate lifestyle adjustments that can be helpful. This topic is just one of the popular in-services we offer to staff at our contracted long- term care facilities in Florida and Illinois.

Click [HERE](#) to explore the full range of in-service topics, including lower extremity edema, [fall prevention](#) and [diabetic foot care](#). Due to popular requests, Quality Podiatry Group is offering downloadable eBooks you can print and distribute to staff and caregivers. Click [HERE](#) for the links.

The Quality Podiatry Group podiatrists are experts at providing care to patients/residents in long-term care facilities in Florida and Illinois.

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