

*Dr. Cal D. Baize*

# Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Clinic

## Ingrowing Nails

If pain and infection occurs more than once in a while it maybe time to consider a permanent nail removal. The proper way to trim a flat or normal nail is straight across and not to short. If the nail is incurvated and irritating the nail boarder then the offending nail needs to be removed. The ingrowing nail acts as a foreign body. Once the nail has been rounded off at the corners the underlying tissue can become expansive and cause difficulty as the nail regrows. This is why I rarely choose temporary removal due to the likely hood of recurrence and damage to the nail bed. I also explained that improper nail trimming is seldom the cause behind ingrown nails, it is usually associated with the nail shape and the bone under the nail. The procedure to remove the nail permanently is referred to as an avulsion and matrixectomy. Either the nail boarder or the total nail may require permanent removal. Once the nail or boarders are removed the nail bed begins to form normal skin in the area where the nail once lived. If the nail is full of fungus thickened or distorted it will most likely be more cosmetically appealing after removal. Generally permanent nail removal is very well tolerated and your activities post operatively are only limited by your symptoms. This procedure is completed on patients that will need to return to normal jobs and activities and shoes the next day. I generally describe the pain as similar to a wound or cut which is generally not noted until it is touched. A shoe will rub the toe and cause pain that you would not normally notice if in a sandal. The procedure is quick and simple for those who perform it regularly and have mastered the technique. It can be dangerous for those with systemic disease or poor circulation. A permanent nail removal will at times need to complete on patients with diabetes or poor circulation due to the threat of infection, which can threaten life and limb. The operation requires an injection to numb the toe, which is usually well tolerated, and the postoperative instructions are simple and easy to comply with.