

## **PARENTS: AVOID 'BATHROOM SURGERY' ON KIDS' INGROWN NAILS**

Ingrown toenails are a common and mostly benign foot problem that often occurs in children ages one to five and in teenagers. However, parents need to be aware that at-home treatment or 'bathroom surgery' can worsen the condition and lead to potentially serious complications, such as severe pain, infection of the skin or underlying bone and possible deformity of the toe.

The most common symptom is swelling and redness in the toes, and some children may complain that their feet hurt when wearing shoes. In many cases, ingrown nails can be relieved by following a few simple tips:

- Wear proper-fitting, softer, wider shoes
- Make sure the child's feet are kept clean and nails cut properly
- Don't force fit hand-me-down shoes
- Never try to cut away the ingrown part of the nail

If the problem persists or recurs, parents are advised to consult a podiatric foot and ankle surgeon to determine if the toenail is imbedded far enough to warrant surgical removal. Never try to snip out the ingrown part of a child's toenail as the potential for infection is quite high. Also, be mindful that if a child has a true ingrown nail, antibiotics or soaks will serve as ONLY a temporarily solution. Seek help before the toe is infected and many complications can be avoided. Lastly, many children (and adults) avoid seeing a foot and ankle specialist out of fear of an agonizing, painful nail procedure. Not true. If the procedure is done appropriately, the procedure is NOT that painful.

Cumberland Foot and Ankle center provides a "kid" friendly environment in their office. Everything possible is done to alleviate pain and discomfort with any procedure performed under local anesthesia in the office.