



**Accident and Emergency Department
New Territories West Cluster
Hospital Authority
Fact Sheet**

Subungual Haematoma Drainage

Version No. 2009/10

Name of Patient :

HKID No.

Sex : Male / Female Age :

Date of Birth :

HN :

Introduction

Subungual haematoma commonly develops following blunt trauma to the nail bed. It results from the accumulation of blood between the nail and the nail bed (Figure 1 & 2). Pain is directly related to the injury itself and the increased pressure from the haematoma. Drainage of haematoma provides significant relief for most patients.

Indication

Fresh subungual haematoma with intact nail plate
(Small haematoma may not require drainage)

Contraindications

1. Nail fracture*
2. Nail avulsion*
3. Artificial nail

*The doctor may consider removal of the nail for repair if necessary

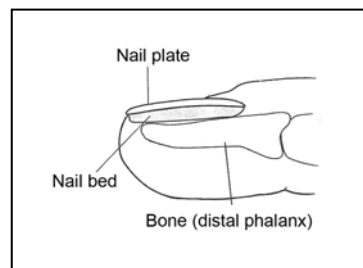


Figure 1

Intended benefits and expected outcome

1. Relief of pain
2. Improve cosmetic outcome

Operative procedure

1. In general, no anaesthesia is needed as nail has no pain sensation
2. Cleanse the injured digit of any dirt and debris
3. Trephination - the process of making one or two small holes in the nail by
 - Battery-operated electrocautery device (Figure 3); or
 - Heated paper clip
4. Apply digital pressure to ensure complete drainage of the haematoma
5. Additional holes maybe needed if the first hole is occluded
6. Dressing

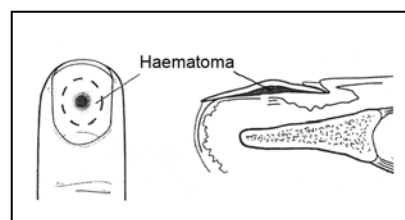


Figure 2

Aftercare

1. Need of antibiotics depends on clinical decision
2. Take the analgesics / antibiotics as prescribed
3. Immunization against tetanus as directed
4. Elevate the injury part to decrease bleeding and swelling
5. Keep the wound clean and monitor drainage*
6. If there is re-accumulation of haematoma, soak the nail in warm water and apply pressure to express the haematoma
7. Attend a doctor if there is
 - Fever OR
 - Increased pain OR
 - Purulent or foul-smelling drainage OR
 - Reddening of the digit

* Mild blood oozing after the operation for 1 to 2 days is expected

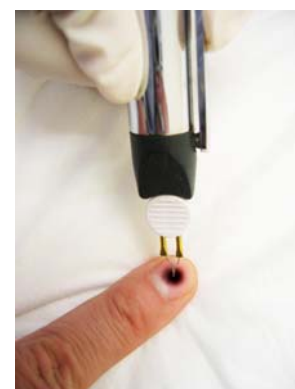


Figure 3

Complications

1. Nail loss
2. Nail deformity
3. Infection

Remarks

Complications depend on the injury severity and may occur even with precise operation. It is impossible to mention all the possible complications that may happen and the above are only a few important complications which may occur.