Subungual Hematoma

You have an accumulation of blood under your nail called a subungual hematoma. This is usually caused by crush injuries to the fingers and toes. **Subungual hematomas are often very painful because of the pressure that builds up with bleeding under the nail**. If the hematoma is large, the injured nail will often separate from its bed over the first few weeks, and a new nail will form in its place. Treatment is directed at pain control and relieving the pressure under the nail.

This injury can be managed by making a small hole in the nail to drain the blood. A heated probe is often used to make the hole in the nail. The pain gets better almost at once after this procedure. Apply ice packs every 2-3 hours and elevate your injury over the next 2 days to reduce the pain. If the pressure builds up again, you can soak the finger or toe in warm water to help promote drainage. **See your doctor or call the emergency room at once if there are signs of an infected nail which include increased pain, redness, swelling, or pus drainage**.

Document Released: 01/25/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.