Subungual Hematoma

A subungual hematoma is a collection of blood under the finger nail. It is caused by an injury to fingers or toes that break the blood vessels beneath the nail. The caregiver may have made a hole in the nail to drain the blood. Draining the blood from beneath the nail is painless and usually gives dramatic relief from the pain. Your nail will usually grow back normally.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the injured area for 20 minutes four times per day for the first 1 or 2 days.
- Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin. Discontinue use if it causes pain.
- Elevate your hand or your foot whenever possible to decrease pain and swelling.
- You may remove the bandage in 3 to 4 days.
- Your nail may fall off. If this occurs, trim it gently to keep it from catching on something and causing further injury.
- If you have been given a tetanus shot, your arm may get swollen, red, and warm to touch at the shot site. This is a normal response to the medicine in the shot. If you did not receive a tetanus shot today because you did not recall when your last one was given, check with your caregiver's office and determine if one is needed. Generally for a “dirty” wound, you should receive a tetanus booster if you have not had one in the last five years. If you have a “clean” wound, you should receive a tetanus booster if you have not had one within the last ten years.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop redness *(inflammation*) or swelling around the affected nail.
- You develop a pus like *(purulent*) discharge from around the affected nail.
- You have pain not controlled with over the counter medications. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.

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