Podiatry Fact Sheet: **Trimming your Toenails**

**Should You Cut Your Toenails Straight or Curved?**

This is probably where the discussion on toenail clipping will get heated. Which method of toenail care is preferable: straight across or rounded corners? The best method is to go straight across if you want to lessen your risk of developing ingrown toenails. You can guarantee that your toenails grow forward as they should by giving them a straight trim. The possibility for your nails to grow into your skin is increased by curved edges.

File your nails down softly rather than clipping them off if you are worried about the corners rubbing up against you or catching on to your socks. If you are not confident at trimming your nails, use an emery board on a weekly basis.

**Don’t Trim Your Toenails Too Short!**

Your nails should never have the white part completely removed. You run the danger of painfully damaging your nail bed if you don’t leave at least a little “strip” of it when you cut your nails. A suitable range is between 1-2 mm of white; this is just enough to prevent cutting too deeply but not far enough to prevent the nails from being hooked or ripped. Toenails typically grow at a rate of 1-2 mm per month. For most people, clipping every 6 to 8 weeks is a decent frequency.

**Make Sure to Use the Right Toenail Cutting Tools**

The greatest instrument for your toenails might not be the same as the best tool for your fingernails because not all clippers are created equal!

Fingernail clippers are smaller, less powerful, and create a more curved cut. For shorter, thinner fingernails, this usually works well. However, using them on toenails that are thicker and bigger can be problematic. A larger toenail requires more clips to pass through, increasing the risk of jaggedness and tearing.

**Another reason for not using toenail clippers on your fingers and vice versa?** It’s easy to spread the fungus from one area to another by using the same clippers on your hands and feet. Only use your clippers on your hands or feet. A clean set of toenail clippers is a necessary component of a decent set. Wipe them down by rubbing alcohol cleanser frequently to get rid of any fungus or bacteria that may have hitched a ride, and simply replace them if they begin to appear worn or unsanitary.

**Try to Soften Your Toenails Beforehand**

Are your toenails often so hard that it requires a lot of force to cut them with clippers? If they are, avoid attempting to force the matter with tools such as toenail clippers. Instead, consider doing your toenail maintenance after taking a shower or bath, when the nail tissue is more likely to be soft, and so more manageable. It can be considerably easier to cut your nails, and you get the extra benefit of having clean feet before starting work! To lessen the chance of slipping, just make sure your feet are completely dry before you begin clipping.