Department of Plastic Surgery Patient Information

Nail bed Injury
This leaflet has been written to give you information to help you care for your child after their nail bed injury.

The nail bed is the tissue between the nail and the bone in your child’s fingertip. The nail bed allows your child’s nail to grow normally. Injury to the nail bed is very common and often breaks the nail and sometimes the bone in the fingertip. This is referred to as tuft fracture and usually does not require any further follow up. Fingertip injuries can be quite painful so your child may need regular painkillers while their finger heals. It is very common to have cuts to the skin around the fingertip too. This injury often requires a simple surgery to repair the nail bed. Unfortunately, repairing the nail bed cannot guarantee normal nail growth in the future.

Follow-up care
After the injury or surgery, your child will have a large dressing on their finger for about 10 days. When this dressing is removed, the tip of your child’s finger may still be a little abnormal looking, but this is to be expected. A smaller dressing may be required on your finger for a few weeks. The injury usually takes four to six weeks to fully heal. During this time it is important to keep your child’s hand and finger moving as normally as possible.

Abnormal or absent nail growth
It can take up to six months for your child’s nail to grow back. Usually, the first nail is abnormal looking and may have ridges or marks on it, but with growth it should become more normal looking. It is possible your child’s nail may not grow back at all or it may grow in two or more pieces. Occasionally, the abnormal nail growth may cause your child ongoing problems. If this is the case, contact one of the numbers below for advice.

Cold intolerance or sensitivity
The tip of your child’s finger contains nerve endings and therefore may be sensitive or painful in cold weather after this injury. These problems usually settle over time but can be helped with some simple advice from a hand therapist. If you think your child may be experiencing this problem, contact one of the numbers below for advice.

Contact Us
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact St. Anne’s Dressing clinic on 01 409 6496 and ask to speak with the Clinical Nurse Specialist or leave a
message for them to call you back or contact the Plastic Surgery Department on 01 409 6050.