



Norma's story – A tale of the crypt.

Normally when we are born, we have 10 toes with nearly flat or slightly domed nails on the ends of them. They grow slowly and usually there are no problems with these nails.

Sometimes, for a number of reasons, the nail will start to grow into the flesh around the nail. This is called an onychocryptosis. It sounds very complicated but the word is made up from two other words, onycho – which means nail, and crypto - which means hidden. Which all means you can't see the change in the nail until it is too late. This is a tale of the crypt...an ingrowing toenail.

Norma was a normal nail. She was perfect when she was first made and she was well looked after. One day, whilst she was being cut, her owner made a small mistake. She cut down the side of the nail to make Norma slightly narrower, but her owner had unknowingly left a sharp edge of nail, that she couldn't see.

At first Norma grew as she always had done, straight and true, but after a few days she began to push the sharp edge of nail into the skin of the toe. At first her owner put up with the discomfort but after a week she saw that her toe along Norma's edge was red and sore. So what did she do? She decided to cut Norma's edge away again.

"Oh. No" screamed Norma, "that won't do at all" She knew trouble was on its way.

But her owner didn't hear her and cut back along the side of her nail.

Well, you can imagine Norma's problem. She was trying to grow straight, just as she always had done, but she couldn't because her owner was being very careless with her, very careless indeed.

After another week, Norma's toe was very sore, so sore in fact that she made her owner limp with pain. Pus had started to ooze from underneath her edges and she started to bleed. "Oh ho" thought Norma, "now what'll happen?"

Norma's owner went to her Doctor, who gave her antibiotics. These are special medicines used to clear infections. They helped with the infection but they didn't stop the problem. Norma kept growing forward and as she did so, she kept pushing into the skin, and it was becoming even more painful.

"Call for Professor Pod" said Norma. Professor Pod advised that Norma's owner should go and see a podiatrist.

The Podiatrist gave advice about cutting toenails:

He said we should always cut our nails straight across and not cut down the sides of our nails. We should file them safely and wash and dry the toes well every day. "If you have painful nails, see your Podiatrist who will help you solve the problems".

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**All information from The Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists Website*