

Patient Education Handout: Paronychia

- A paronychia is an infection of the skin around the nail fold of the fingers or toes.
- The most common causes of paronychia are nail biting, sucking your thumb or finger, and pushing down the skin at the base of the nail (cuticle).
- The pain often disappears after the pus has been drained.
- Elevate your hand or foot to reduce throbbing and pain as needed.
- Packing material **was/was not** (circle one) placed inside the wound to allow more drainage and help the wound heal from the bottom first.
- If packing material was used, it needs to be removed by your health care provider after 24-48 hours.
- Clean the affected finger or toe with soap and warm water after the packing is removed and soak the affected finger or toe in warm water for 10-15 minutes, 3 to 4 times per day.
- Antibiotics are not always needed after drainage of the paronychia; your health care provider will inform you if antibiotic treatment is required.
- Watch for signs and symptoms of infection (recollection of pus, fever, increased pain and redness, red streaks near the wound, increased swelling) and return to the clinic or seek care from another health care provider.
- Return to the clinic for re-examination of the wound in _____.

