TOENAIL INJURIES (TORN TOE NAIL, “QUICKED” NAIL)

**What is it?** Toenail injuries can occur due to trauma or during nail trimming. Toenails have soft tissue with a blood supply in the center, commonly referred to as the “quick”. Nails can be injured if they are trimmed too short, exposing the soft tissue and blood supply. Nails also can be torn if they are caught on something or when pets scratch a rough surface excessively.

**What animals are affected?** Both dogs and cats can sustain toenail injuries. Nails that are long and have not been regularly trimmed are more prone to tearing and bleeding.

**What are the signs?** Bleeding from an injured nail is common. Sometimes the foot will be painful and the pet may limp. Toenails may be loose or missing.

**How is it diagnosed?** An injured toenail is usually obvious. Bleeding from the toenail and a loose or missing nail may be noted.

**How is it treated?** An injured, bleeding nail may be treated at home by packing the area with corn starch, flour, or a product designed specifically to help control bleeding such as Kwik Stop Powder. If the nail continues to bleed, veterinary care may be needed. Some nail injuries require the quick to be trimmed and a bandage placed for a few days to protect the foot.

**What after care is needed?** Enforce rest for a few days. Limited activity can help reduce the chance for repeated trauma to the nail.

**What is the prognosis?** Excellent. Most nails will grow back normally after a nail injury.

**Can it be prevented?** Trim nails regularly to keep them short and healthy. When properly cared for, nails will be less likely to tear or catch on things. Some pets may resent having their feet handled and their nails trimmed. It is important to begin these things at a young age to acclimate the pets to these procedures.

Additional information on nail trimming techniques and tools is available at: [www.veterinarypartner.com](http://www.veterinarypartner.com)