

## **Gertrude the toe nail**

Gertrude was a big toenail who had a twin sister and eight smaller sisters. She grew on the end of a lady's big toe!

She was a very proud toe nail because she grew straight and was perfect in every way. Her owner made sure she was cut properly (straight across and not cut away at the sides).

Gertrude loved her life. She and her sisters were pampered and were painted a different colour everyday. On Mondays, they were purple; on Tuesdays they were red; on Wednesdays silver; on Thursdays they were golden; on Fridays they were pale blue and at the weekends they were left alone without nail varnish, although she was polished and buffed. Everyday she was kept in fabulous fashionable shoes and everybody noticed her and commented on her shape and colour.

One day, her owner was given the present of a special nail treatment, where somebody else would look after Gertrude and her 9 sisters. "Oh how beautiful we shall be ", they chimed together as their excitement grew.

Their big day came. First they were washed and dried, then covered in a strong lotion to strip away their varnish. "Oh that's sharp", thought Gertrude, "but it will all be so worth it when it's finished". The nails were buffed, polished and all their edges trimmed and filed. They were all a lot shorter than they had been and they all felt ready to go home. However they hadn't been finished. The next stage entailed a hard sander being applied to them and a lotion applied to seal their outer layer. Then, thin layers varnish were applied with glitter, sequins and stars as decorations. "Wow we look good" the nails squealed in excitement. Everybody noticed them and remarked how beautiful they looked.

The lady was so pleased that she had this treatment every week. At first Gertrude and her sisters were thrilled, but over time they became very unhappy. Their topcoats became thin and wavy. Their surfaces were dull and they looked so ugly that the lady had to keep them covered with varnish all the time. The nails had changed from being perfect to being damaged by too many special treatments.

Professor Pod says " It's OK to have varnish to decorate your nails for some of the time, but the chemicals in varnish can change the surface of your nails if you varnish them all the time. They will change colour and become rough on the top if you don't look after them properly".

If you are unsure, ask your Podiatrist for advice.