Quick Reference Guide
Nursing Strategies for Basic Hand & Foot Nail Care

Concerns Noted with Client History and/or Basic Limb & Nail Assessments (Lower & Upper)

- Nail fold and/or cuticle inflamed
- Ingrown nail
- Broken nail below free nail edge
- Detached nail
- Misshapen or thickened nail
- Discoloured nail not client's normal

Do not provide nail care to nail(s) of concern.

Refer toenail concern to FCN or MRP

Refer fingernail concern to MRP

Loss of Protective Sensation (LPOS)

Edema of fingers and/or toes

HCAs cannot provide nail care to those with LOPS or edema

Risk of infection due to compromised immune system, (e.g., diabetes, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, HIV/AIDS or on chemotherapy)

Risk of prolonged bleeding, (e.g. on an anticoagulant or platelet inhibitor) or due to condition, (e.g., hemophilia)

For nail(s) with a free nail edge provide care (trim and/or file) as per care plan

Limb pale in colour, cool/cold with diminished pulse(s) and/or toes with black eschared areas or 'punched out' looking wounds

Do not trim or file nails and inform MRP
Determine nail care plan once investigation has been done

Note: if foot concerns are noted, (e.g., callus, warts, athletes' foot, abnormal foot structure), refer to FCN or MRP.

Developed by the BC Provincial Nursing Skin & Wound Committee