Nail bed loss in the thumb: a rare troublesome problem with an easy solution.

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"The problem"
Isolated loss of sterile nail matrix is a rather uncommon lesion but, when occurs, it represents a difficult reconstructive challenge.

How would you do?

Our Proposal
By means of two dorsal longitudinal incisions a flap is raised on the thumb, leaving in continuity the dorsal skin and the residual nail matrix. The dissection is carried out beneath the nail matrix and beyond the insertion of the extensor tendon. The significant forward movement of the flap allows all the exposed bone to be completely covered.

The results
Both patients we treated with the described technique rapidly healed with no complications such as flap suffering or infections. They also had a rapid and complete recover of function with no joint stiffness.

Our Conclusions
Since isolated nail bed loss in the thumb is a rare lesion, we have employed the described dorsal advancement flap just in two cases so far. Nevertheless in both cases the flap, which is quick and easy to perform, demonstrated to be very reliable. It also does not require complex procedures or further surgical fields. In those peculiar situations it now represents our first choice in reconstruction of the thumb.