



Fungal Nail Infections

What Is A Fungal Nail Infection?

A fungal nail infection, or, **onychomycosis**, is an infection of part or the whole toenail that causes a breakdown to the nail.

Certain medical conditions can increase your risk of Onychomycosis as can environmental conditions and trauma. Onychomycosis is rarely dangerous in otherwise healthy people however the thickened, discoloured nails may cause pain with activity, increase your risk of bacterial infection and can have significant psychosocial consequences.

What Do Fungal Nail Infections Look Like?

Fungal nail infections typically cause the nail to become discoloured and thickened. One nail or many of the nails may be affected. An offensive odour can be associated with the infection.



What Causes Fungal Nail Infections?

Fungal nail infections are most commonly caused by fungi called dermatophytes following some sort of trauma to the toenail. Once the fungus has infiltrated the nail structure, it sets about doing what fungus does in nature; it begins to compost the toenail.

How Do We Treat Fungal Nail Infections

The aim of fungal nail infection treatment is to kill or remove the fungus from the toenail and allow a healthy nail to regrow. There is a possibility of permanent damage to the nail growth point if the fungal nail infection has been present for a long time or is particularly severe.

4 options currently exist for the management of fungal nail infections:

- 1. Do nothing** Your nail will continue to deteriorate and the infection will spread.
- 2. Nail Paints** Topical agents can be effective in the treatment for Onychomycosis if used as recommended and for a long enough time. Different topical agents work differently on different people so you may need to try a range of these till you find one that works for you.
- 3. Tablets** There is good evidence to suggest some tablets are beneficial. Cure rates from 38-68% have been reported with terbinafine (Lamisil®). This treatment has been associated with a range of potentially serious side effects including liver failure and sensory loss.

4. Light Therapy Complete Podiatry's PactMED Fungal Nail Treatment System can be used in the management of Onychomycosis. Cure rates from 77-87% have been reported with these systems. We have found this to be the most effective treatment for superficial and moderate fungal nail infections.



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