

Fungal Toenail Infection

Fungal infection of the nails (onychomycosis) causes changes in the appearance of fingernails and toenails. The nails may thicken, discolor, change shape or split. This condition is difficult to treat because nails grow slowly and have limited blood supply. It is common to have the infection come back after treatment.

There are two types of medicines used.

- Topical anti-fungal medicines are applied to the surface of the skin and nail area. These medicines are not very effective because they cannot get deep into the nail.
- Topical medicines are most useful in combination with oral medicines . Oral antifungal medicines are more effective because they penetrate the nail from the inside out.

If medicines fail, the nail can be removed surgically or chemically. This improves the effectiveness of medical treatment because the fungus is physically removed from the body.

HOME CARE:

- 1) Use medicines exactly as directed for as long as directed. Treating a fungal infection can take longer than other kinds of infections.
- 2) Smoking is a risk factor for fungal infection. This is one more reason to quit.
- 3) Wear absorbent socks and shoes that have ventilation. Sweaty feet increases risk of fungal infection and make an existing infection harder to treat.
- 4) Use footwear when in damp public places like swimming pools, gyms and shower rooms. This helps avoid exposure to the fungus that grows there.

FOLLOW UP with your doctor as directed by our staff.

GET PROMPT MEDICAL ATTENTION if any of the following occur:

- Skin alongside the nail becomes reddened, swollen, painful or drains pus
- Side effects from oral anti-fungal medicines