

Fungal Nail Infections

Fungal nail infections usually affect your toenails but you can get them on your finger nails too.



Fungal nail infections usually start at the edge of the nail. They often then spread to the middle. The nail becomes discoloured and lifts off and there is a swelling in the skin around the nail.

Fungal nail infections develop when your feet are constantly warm and damp. You're more likely to get an infection if you wear trainers for a long time and have hot, sweaty feet.

If you have diabetes you should see a foot specialist because any foot injury can lead to complications

How can I avoid triggers / suggested lifestyle changes

To prevent fungal nail infection:

Do

- Keep your feet clean and dry
- Wear clean socks every day, wear flip flops in showers at the gym, pool etc.
- Throw out old shoes
- Wash socks at 60°C or above.

Don't

- Wear shoes that make your feet hot and sweaty
- Share towels
- Wear other people's shoes

Managing your condition

Most fungal nail infections do not need medication. You should:

- Keep your feet clean and dry
- Use separate clippers or scissors to cut your infected nails

How do I treat?

If the look of your nail bothers you or it's painful, speak to your pharmacist. They may suggest treatment with medication:

- **Antifungal nail cream** - it can take up to 12 months to cure the infection and doesn't always work
- **Nail softening cream** - used for 2 weeks to soften the nail so the infection can be scraped off

The infection is cured when you see healthy nail growing back at the base.

Speak to your pharmacist - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you and your symptoms.

When should I seek advice?

Seek further advice from your GP if your fungal nail infection;

- Is severe and treatment hasn't worked
- Has spread to other nails

More information is available at the following website

- NHS website - www.nhs.uk
- Or visit your local pharmacy for advice

The 'Be self-care aware' campaign was created by NHS Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group and is reproduced here with their kind permission.

¹ Photo courtesy of NHS Website