

A close-up photograph of a human foot, focusing on the big toe. The toenail is significantly discolored with yellow and brown streaks and is thickened, which is characteristic of a fungal nail infection. The surrounding skin appears slightly red and irritated.

Know the facts on

# Fungal Nails

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## What are Fungal Nails?

Fungal nail infections are common and can affect both the fingernails and the toenails. The problem usually affects more men than women and becomes more common the older you become.

A fungal nail infection causes visual changes to the nail. It causes the nail to change colour, thicken and become brittle. As the infection progresses the nails will start to produce a distinct odour. Around half of all nail problems are due to fungal nail infections.



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# What causes Fungal Nails?

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Fungi called Dermatophytes live harmlessly on the skin but can often multiply and lead to infection in dark, warm and moist environments such as the feet. Certain shoes can make feet hot and sweaty which can lead to the fungi multiplying quickly. Not keeping the feet clean and dry can also increase infection risk.

# What will happen if I leave it untreated?

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The infection will progress if left untreated. The nail can become discoloured with the nail turning white, yellow, green or even black. The nail can become thickened and the texture can change making it difficult to trim. The shape of the nail can also change which can cause discomfort when placing pressure on the toes that are affected.



# What can help?

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Keeping feet clean and dry can help to reduce the risk of developing a fungal nail infection. Wearing shoes made from natural materials and cotton socks will allow the feet to breathe.

Fungal residue can build up in towels and socks, therefore, it is very important that they are washed regularly and not shared with others.

# What are the treatment options?

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There is a choice of either oral or topical anti-fungal treatments.

Oral anti-fungal treatments can be prescribed by your GP if you are suitable.

Topical treatments are available over the counter or from your podiatrist. Fungal nail infections can take a long time to resolve (Twelve months+), but the proper preparation of the nail surface by a podiatrist prior to applying the topical agent can increase the success.