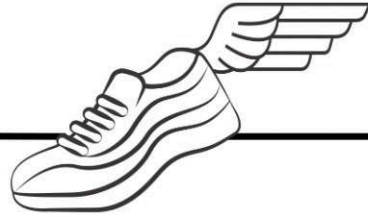


NAIL FUNGUS



FUNGAL NAIL INFECTIONS, ALSO KNOWN AS ONYCHOMYCOSIS, ARE CAUSED BY FUNGI THAT INFECT THE NAIL BED, CAUSING DISCOLORATION, THICKENING, AND BRITTLENESS. TREATMENT OPTIONS INCLUDE TOPICAL OR ORAL ANTIFUNGAL MEDICATIONS, AND IN SEVERE CASES, NAIL REMOVAL. PREVENTION FOCUSES ON HYGIENE, KEEPING NAILS TRIMMED, AND AVOIDING POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INFECTION.

SYMPTOMS:

- DISCOLORATION (YELLOW, WHITE, OR BROWN)
- THICKENING OF THE NAIL
- BRITTLENESS AND CRUMBLING OF THE NAIL
- SEPARATION OF THE NAIL FROM THE NAIL BED
- PAIN OR DISCOMFORT



CAUSES:

- FUNGAL INFECTIONS, OFTEN DERMATOPHYTES, ARE THE PRIMARY CAUSE.
- MOIST, WARM ENVIRONMENTS, LIKE LOCKER ROOMS AND SWIMMING POOLS, CAN INCREASE THE RISK.
- POOR HYGIENE, SUCH AS NOT KEEPING NAILS CLEAN AND DRY, CAN CONTRIBUTE.
- UNDERLYING CONDITIONS LIKE DIABETES OR A WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEM CAN ALSO INCREASE SUSCEPTIBILITY.



DIAGNOSIS:

- A DOCTOR WILL VISUALLY EXAMINE THE NAIL AND MAY TAKE NAIL CLIPPINGS OR SCRAPINGS FOR MICROSCOPIC ANALYSIS OR FUNGAL CULTURE.
- A DERMATOLOGIST SPECIALIZES IN DIAGNOSING AND TREATING NAIL CONDITIONS.

TREATMENT:

- TOPICAL MEDICATIONS: ANTIFUNGAL CREAMS, GELS, OR POLISHES MAY BE EFFECTIVE FOR MILD INFECTIONS.
- ORAL MEDICATIONS: ANTIFUNGAL PILLS, LIKE TERBINAFINE, ARE OFTEN THE FIRST CHOICE FOR MORE SEVERE INFECTIONS.; BLOODWORK TO CONFIRM NORMAL LIVER ENZYMES REQUIRED.
- NAIL REMOVAL: IN SEVERE CASES, WE CAN TEMPORARILY REMOVE THE NAIL OR PERFORM NAIL FENESTRATION (DRILLING HOLES IN THE NAIL) TO IMPROVE TOPICAL TREATMENT.
- LASER THERAPY: IN SOME CASES, LASER TREATMENT MAY BE USED.



PREVENTION:

- KEEP NAILS CLEAN AND DRY.
- TRIM NAILS STRAIGHT ACROSS AND FILE DOWN THICKENED AREAS.
- WEAR ABSORBENT SOCKS AND CHANGE THEM FREQUENTLY, ESPECIALLY IF FEET SWEAT A LOT.
- WEAR FOOTWEAR IN PUBLIC SHOWERS AND LOCKER ROOMS.
- CHOOSE A NAIL SALON THAT STERILIZES TOOLS.
- DISINFECT NAIL CLIPPERS AFTER EACH USE.
- AVOID SHARING PERSONAL ITEMS LIKE TOWELS AND NAIL CLIPPERS.

