

Integrative Nail Fungus Therapy

What You Need to Know

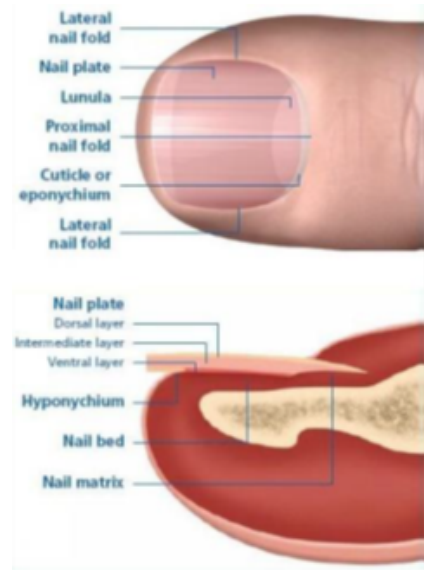


What is Onychomycosis and Dermatophytosis?

Toe nail fungus, or onychomycoses, and athlete's foot, or dermatophytosis, are fungal infections by groups of organisms called dermatophytes and yeasts. The main difference between the two is that athlete's foot is an infection of the skin and nail fungus is an infection of the nail itself.

Typically athlete's foot is easier treated than toe fungus. It is common to have both types of infections, as they are easily spread through repetitive contact with other infected surfaces. They are usually caused by a combination of factors, including repetitive trauma to the toes, re-exposure, genetics, reduced circulation to the feet or a compromised immune system.

Symptoms of athlete's foot can be itchiness or stinging, cracked or peeling skin in the heels or webbing of the toes, and discoloration of the skin. Symptoms of toe nail fungus starts as subtle discoloration of the sides of the nail leading it to grow brittle edges. Advancement of the infection can lead to thickening of the nail. Since many patients with toe nail fungus also have athlete's foot it is common for your doctor to treat both.



Common pathogens: photo courtesy of BritaMed Inc.

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What to Expect

Initial consultation will consist of a medical history and an initial culture of toe clippings to be sent for analysis. Please do not clip toe nails before an initial consultation as we will collect clippings to send out for analysis.

Treatment sessions will consist of a 45-60 minute appointment where the practitioner will debride (if necessary) thickened nails and then use a laser to destroy any spores that may be in the nail bed.

Debridement uses a medical podiatry drill and is relatively painless, it is common to experience mild heat due to friction with this procedure.

Laser treatment uses a diode on the nail bed and is also relatively painless, where someone may expect to feel slightly more heat on the skin.

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What to Expect (Cont'd)

In line with our holistic approach, education, orthopedic adjustments, foot care, and other adjunctive protocols may be recommended to tailor a specific treatment plan that is unique to you as an individual.

For optimal results, it is vital and necessary to continue self-care at home, which includes using a footwear fumigation kit and a topical anti-fungal prescription, all of which will be explained by your doctor.

After an initial series of four mechanical debridement and laser nail fungus treatments performed at two week or one month intervals, typically a 2-3 month break from treatment will be recommended for nail growth.

Note that more severe fungal infections may warrant ongoing treatments as prescribed by your doctor. It is reasonable to expect that nails will not become instantly clear, instead will gradually improve over months. It can take up to 9-18 months to completely grow out a new set of healthy nails after successful treatment.



Approx. 5 months apart. Images courtesy of Dr. Coralie Emond DPM (Beauport)

Although there are no absolute contraindications to this treatment please indicate to your doctor if you have diabetes, diabetic neuropathy, an immunocompromised condition, or are on blood thinners.

Notes



Image courtesy of Dr. M. Naran MD (Vancouver).