

Fast Facts

Fungal Nail Infections

- Can result from several different fungal organisms, but the most common cause is the fungus called dermatophyte
 - Often, a toenail fungal infection starts as athlete's foot (more likely to affect toenails)
 - Infections can travel from one nail to another but not likely to travel from person to person
 - Can happen at any age
 - More likely to occur in older adults because nails become brittle and dry as you age
- Other things that can increase your chances are sweating heavily, having a history of athlete's feet, walking barefoot in damp communal areas (ex. swimming pools, gyms, and shower rooms), having a minor skin or nail injury, having specific conditions (ex. psoriasis), or having diabetes
 - Severe cases can be painful and cause permanent damage to the nails

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Initial Stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -White or yellow spot under the tip of fingernail or toenail <p><i>Later Stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discolored nail -Thickened nail -Nails that crumble at edge -Distorted shape -Slightly foul smell 	<p><i>Mild:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Over-the-counter creams and ointments -Trim and thin nails -Soften nails before trimming and filing with urea-containing creams -If you have poor blood flow to your feet, see a healthcare provider regularly to have nails trimmed <p><i>Severe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pills are preferred because they can get rid of the infection quicker, such as terbinafine and itraconazole -Medicated nail polish (ciclopirox) -Medicated nail cream -Surgically removing the nail so the medicine can be applied directly to the infection -If your condition doesn't respond to any treatment, you might need your nail removed permanently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wash hands and feet regularly, especially if you have an infected nail -Moisturize your nails after washing -Trim nails straight across with smooth edges -Thin thickened areas -Disinfect nail clippers after each use -Wear sweat-absorbing socks or change your socks throughout the day -Choose shoes made of materials that breathe and discard old shoes or treat them with disinfectants or antifungal powders -Wear footwear when in pool areas and locker room -If you go to a nail salon, choose one that uses sterilized manicure tools for each customer -If this doesn't work, stop using nail polish and artificial nails

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