

THE FOOT & GAIT CLINIC

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

FUNGAL INFECTIONS

TREATMENT OPTIONS



What are **FUNGAL SKIN INFECTIONS?**



Fungal skin infections - Tinea Pedis (athletes foot) on the foot are common. You will find this type of fungus on the soles and borders of the feet and in-between the toes. The appearance comes across as white patches, red dots and flakey skin/ patches on your feet. This can even lead to cracks and cause bleeding, typically in-between toes. If not treated, it can spread to your toenails and cause a fungal nail infection.

What causes fungal infections on the skin?

- It can be picked up through direct skin to skin contact with someone who is infected or by contaminated surfaces with fungus.
- Fungus develops in warm moist settings, it can be found in:
 - changing rooms
 - showers
 - swimming pools and
 - spa settings.

What are the symptoms of athletes foot?

There are many different signs and symptoms of this type of fungus, this can include:

- Itching.
- Stinging/ burning sensation.
- Cracks/ peeling skin.
- Red raw skin in appearance.
- In worse cases, pustules can form.

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HOW ARE FUNGAL SKIN INFECTIONS *Treated?*

Fungal Skin Infections This can be treated by over the counter topical anti-fungal medications. Here are some brands we recommend:

- Lamisil (Terbinafine)
- Desenex (Miconazole)
- Tinactin (Tolnaftate)
- Lotrimin (Clotrimazole and Butenafine)

* Studies show that using any Terbinafine products on the skin should be continued for at least 6-8 weeks to prevent reoccurring infections. Products that end in 'azole' e.g. miconazole should be used even longer, for around 8-10 weeks.

These come in spray, creams or powder forms, all topical. If the infection hasn't been treated by topical treatments, I would advise seeking medical advice from your GP with possibility of prescribed topical or oral medication.

How to prevent Tinea Pedis:

- Washing your feet with soap during bathing and making sure you're drying your feet. When water collects on your feet, especially in between your toes this makes a good environment for athletes foot to develop.
- Washing socks, towels and bedding at 60 degree temperature. This will eradicate fungal spores.
- Don't share socks, shoes or towels.
- To wear flipflops/ sandals in public areas, swimming pools or changing rooms.
- Changing socks daily and to have more breathable material such as cotton, this will allow more airflow and reduce hot and sweaty feet.
- Avoid picking flaked off skin. This could cause skin tears or even promote the fungal infection to spread.

What are **FUNGAL NAIL INFECTIONS?**



A fungal nail - Onychomycosis, is the most common nail complaint in the UK. It can affect finger nails as well as toe nails and 90% of cases are caused by the same fungus that causes athletes foot.

Causes: Anyone can develop this condition, but certain factors can increase the risk, such as smoking, older age, doing sports such as running and swimming or having your hands or feet in water frequently. It is more common in people who have medical conditions such as psoriasis and diabetes.

Symptoms: Fungal nails often appear thick and brittle as well as discoloured (white, yellow or brown). There maybe a build-up of debris under the nail distorting and detaching the nail. To confirm a fungal presence the nail needs to be tested.

Many people suffering with this condition find it unsightly and embarrassing. It can impact on your quality of life.

Untreated fungus can spread to other nails, the groin/trunk and to other members of the family. It can also cause cellulitis in the elderly.

A fungal nail infection is unlikely to get better without treatment.

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Options for **TREATMENT**



1 Antifungal Sprays/ creams with Podiatry Care

The fungus is in the skin under the nail, not in the nail itself, therefore simply painting the nail with lacquer is pointless and ineffective. Regular podiatry visits to expose the infected



2 Chemical Lysis

As it can take a long time for antifungal medication to work, some people may prefer to use a treatment that involves softening and removing the infected nail over a few weeks.



3 Laser Therapy

Laser treatment is a possible option if you have a fungal nail infection that is not responding to other treatments. The laser emits high doses of light energy, which are used to destroy the fungus.

FUNGAL NAIL TEST *And*

ANTIFUNGAL TREATMENTS

5 minute Fungal Nail Test

The Dermatophyte Test Strip (DTS) is a major breakthrough in dermatophyte diagnosis. A simple test undertaken in clinic which returns accurate and clear results in under 5 minutes.

Other conditions, such as psoriasis, can mimic a fungal infection of the nail. Microorganisms such as yeast and bacteria may also infect nails. Knowing the cause of your infection helps determine the best treatment option for you.

Treatment depends on the severity of your condition and the type of fungus causing it. It can take months to see results. And even if your nail condition improves, repeat infections are common.



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Topical Anti-Fungal Treatments with Podiatry Care

Our podiatrists can examine and advise you on your best treatment options. They will also provide information and advice on how to prevent the infection from either spreading or recurring.

If nails are thickened your podiatrist can thin the nail(s) making them less unsightly. Thinning the nail will also allow any topical anti-fungals to penetrate the nail; making topical anti-fungal treatment more effective.

Chemical Cystis TREATMENT



1 40% Urea paste is applied daily to the nail using a cotton bud and the area is covered with tape.

2 After 2 weeks you will return to the clinic to have as much of the nail removed as possible. The more nail that is removed the better.



3 You will then paint the remaining nail with a fungicidal lacquer. On the surrounding skin you will apply an anti-fungal cream.

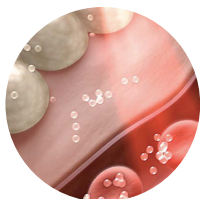
4 Gradually as the nail grows up clear of infection you will use more lacquer and less cream.



5 It is a slow process and takes commitment and patience and still there are no guarantees of success. The nails have to be painted as they grow, so it depends on an individual's speed of nail growth and can take as long as 1 year to 18 months.

Laser Therapy TREATMENT

A course of K-Laser treatments can destroy the fungus within the toenail, or can be used post toenail avulsion to accelerate the healing of the nail bed and boost the local immune response. It is also effective on Paronychia.



Treatment Process:

3 appointments are required in 1 week (7 days) followed by a 2 week break and then another x 3 appointments in 1 week (7 days)

If the nails have been infected for longer than 5 years then this process will need to be repeated (a further x 6 appointments)



Patients must bring clean socks to wear after the session. Shoes must be thoroughly disinfected at the beginning of the session.

For the duration of the laser course, patients should disinfect ALL footwear and wash socks at 60° as per standard of care. They should disinfect their shoes every day after they take them off .



Used nail polish should be thrown away because it may be contaminated.

There are thousands of species of fungi and bacteria that can cause nail infections: some are weak and are cleared easily, others are more resistant.

Patients with poor general health and poorer immune system will likely require some more sessions than younger, healthier patients. Supplements that boost the immune system can help.

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Let's get in touch

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