

Nail Fungus

It Lurks in Warm and Moist Places – Beware of Toenail Fungus!

Are your toenails horrible to look at? Does the thought of taking off your socks in front of people make you cringe? If your toenails are a dark color, lacking in shine, brittle or thick, you may be suffering from toenail fungus. Dr. Harvey Danciger, of Palm Desert, CA, has years of experience in dealing with issues of the foot and ankle. He can help with immediate treatment of fungal toenails and give you tips for prevention.

What is toenail fungus?

Nail fungus, also called onychomycosis, is an infection that happens in one or more of your toenails. When an infection gets into your toenails, it separates the nail from the nail bed. If this occurs, you may feel pain in your toes and smell a slight foul odor.

Why does toenail fungus occur?

The fungus that affects the toenails belongs to a group of fungi called dermatophytes. This type of fungi thrives in dark, warm and damp locations such as swimming pools and showers. Your shoes are also the perfect place for the fungus to live. Fungus can enter your skin through tiny cuts, which may not be visible, or through a space between your nail and the nail bed.

What are the symptoms of toenail fungus?

You may first notice a white or yellow spot under the tip of your toenail. Fungus can also appear on your fingernails. However, the spot under the tip of your toenail is an indicator of a fungus infection. When the infection spreads deeper into the nail, you can experience thick nails, brittle crumbling edges, or discolored nails that are dark or dull.

How does Dr. Danciger treat toenail fungus?

Fungal infections tend to be difficult to treat and can happen again after treatment. However, patients visiting Dr. Danciger have positive results from his treatment options. Common treatment options include:

- Oral antifungal medication, which can slowly help replace the infected portion of the nail. This medication can be taken from six to 12 weeks, but results can take months get rid of the infection.
- Laser treatment
- Antifungal lacquer, which you paint on your toenails daily. It can take up to one year of applying the lacquer for the infection to go away.
- Surgery may be needed in severe or painful toenail fungus. With surgery, the toenail is removed and a new one will grow in its place. However, it may take up to a year for a new toenail to appear.

What you can do to prevent toenail fungus!

- Wear shower shoes if you are using public showers or swimming pools.
- Wash and dry your feet thoroughly – especially between your toes!
- Trim your toenails regularly. Cut them straight across and not too short.
- Change your socks and shoes regularly. Also, do not borrow anyone's shoes or socks.

Dr. Danciger wants to help keep your feet healthy. To schedule an appointment at our Palm Desert office, call (760) 568-0108.