

ATHLETE'S FOOT AND FUNGAL NAILS



Athlete's Foot (Tinea Pedis) is a rash caused by a fungus that usually appears between the toes. The affected skin may be itchy, red, scaly, dry, cracked or blistered. It is not usually serious, but should be treated to prevent it spreading to other parts of the body or other people.

Onychomycosis, also called Tinea Unguium, is a fungal infection that affects the fingernails and, more commonly, the toe nails. Fungal infections normally develop over time, so any immediate difference in the way your nail looks or feels may be too subtle to notice at first.

- Fungal spores can live in footwear that have not been worn for some time and can reactivate when favourable conditions are present
- Nail fungus is an opportunist and often infects the nail following damage, which is why it doesn't always spread to the adjacent healthy nails
- Fungus loves shoes. The warm, dark and moist conditions found inside your shoe is an ideal environment for a fungus to thrive
- When treating a fungal infection it is crucial to sanitise all footwear to ensure comprehensive eradication as re-infection is likely follow and anti-fungal spray such as Daktarin should be used every time you change your shoes
- Fungal spores do not survive a 60°C wash so wearing socks once and washing them in a hot wash will sanitise them. Socks carrying fungal spores stored in a laundry basket will contaminate other garments and about 10% of spores will be transferred. Very few viable spores are required for an infection to take hold
- Nail fungus is very difficult to eradicate with over-the counter (OTC) products

- Not all the discolouration you see is 'live' fungus. A fungal nail infection is like a forest fire – it is easy to see where it has been but it is only active at the leading edge which usually extends underneath the nail towards the matrix (where the nail grows)
- When a Podiatrist applies an OTC product they begin by removing the dead part of the fungal nail. This allows direct application of the product into the site of the infection. Clinical evidence of effectiveness is patchy and it could take several years of diligent application to be successful.

What to do next

- Oral medication is an option and usually (but not always) successful – for this you will need to speak to your GP
- Laser treatment is very expensive and results can be inconsistent
- We offer CLEARNAIL - a new and innovative treatment for fungal nails. Painless (computer-controlled) puncturing of very small holes in the nail enable Lamisil spray to pass through the holes to reach the infected tissue.

Remember

- Curing the infection does not mean immunity and it could appear again if preventative action is not taken
- If a nail is damaged in the future it is crucial to be vigilant to avoid re-infection.