



Foot Health Fact Sheet

FUNGAL AND NAIL INFECTIONS

Did you know...

Toenail fungus is more common than you may think... around 10% of the Australian adult population is affected by Onychomycosis (*Tinea unguium*) – a very typical form of nail fungus, often found on the foot!

No-one likes to talk about it, but many people experience fungal and nail infections. Read on to see how to avoid these types of infections, and what to do if you have an infection on your feet or toenails.

Nail fungus is often caused by something called 'dermatophytes', which are fungi found growing on skin, hair, nails and other bodily surfaces.

When dermatophytes get underneath your nail, it causes yellow/brownish discolouration and the nail can become quite thick and maintain a crumbly texture when cut.

If left untreated, the skin underneath your nail can become inflamed and/or painful – and it may retain a foul smell. It is so important to contact a podiatrist at the first indication of a fungal or nail infection, to avoid further complications.

How can you avoid fungal and nail infections?

The answer mostly lies in good foot hygiene. Examples include:

- Frequently wash your feet
- Never share nail clippers or nail files
- Avoid going barefoot in public establishments – such as showers or pool areas
- Keep your nails trimmed regularly with no sharp edges
- Never wear the same pair of socks two days in a row
- Never share footwear with other people
- Wear footwear that fits properly and is breathable

All of the above will help to keep germs at bay, and prevent moisture from building up in these regions, which can lead to infection.

How can you treat fungal and nail infections?

Some at-home treatments include washing your socks and/or hosiery with a combination of hot water and an anti-fungal wash. It can also help to clean and air your shoes regularly, alternating them with another pair to allow for a thorough cleaning.

Keep all floor surfaces clean by vacuuming regularly – and be sure to disinfect the base of your shower or tub directly after someone with a fungal infection has showered or soaked.

In addition, pharmaceutical antifungal treatments can include a range of products on the market. It is very important to precisely follow the instructions outlined on these products – and follow through until the infection is completely resolved. If your condition doesn't improve or worsens, please see a podiatrist.



Find a podiatrist at foothealthaustralia.org.au

This fact sheet is available as a download from foothealthaustralia.org.au



DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?



DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- ☐ Can you only walk for a short period before your feet or legs hurt?
- ☐ Do you experience pain in your lower limbs at night?
- ☐ Do you experience tingling in your feet?
- ☐ Have you noticed your legs or feet are swollen?
- ☐ Do you have cuts or fissures on your feet that take a long time to heal?
- ☐ Are you returning to sport after an injury?
- ☐ Are you uncertain about which running or sports shoe to buy?
- ☐ Do you find that you wear out the outside of your shoes quickly?
- ☐ Have you noticed your toes poke holes in the top of your shoes?
- ☐ Does your forefoot become hot and painful after running or walking?
- ☐ Do your hips hurt?
- ☐ Has pain in your feet or legs stopped you from exercising?
- ☐ Are you worried about your child's feet?
- ☐ Do you have arthritis in your feet?
- ☐ Do you experience reoccurring gouty attacks?
- ☐ Are you worried about the thickness of your nails?
- ☐ Do you have discoloured toe nails?
- ☐ Are you worried about your foot odour?
- ☐ Do your toe nails cause you pain?
- ☐ Have you noticed your toes are clawed?
- ☐ Do you have hard skin on your feet? Is it getting worse?
- ☐ Do you find it hard to cut your own nails?
- ☐ Do you find it hard to fit your feet into shoes because of your bunion?

Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.

GO SEE A PODIATRIST BECAUSE...

Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.

They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

FIND A PODIATRIST NEAR YOU

Head to **foothealthaustralia.org.au** and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



Find a podiatrist at **foothealthaustralia.org.au**

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