



Fungal Nail

Patient Information

WHAT IS FUNGAL NAIL?

A Fungal Nail infection, also known as Onychomycosis or Tinea Unguium, affects the skin beneath the nail (nail bed), leading to visible and physical changes in the nail plate. A common sign is discolouration, which can range from white and yellow to brown or even black. However, it's important to note that not all nail discolouration is caused by fungal infections—these conditions are frequently misdiagnosed. If a fungal nail infection is suspected, it's essential to consult a Foot Health Professional for an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

COMMON CAUSES

- **Fungal spread from athlete's foot**
- **Warm, moist environments** (sweaty shoes, locker rooms)
- **Nail trauma**
- **Poor foot hygiene**
- **Reduced immunity**
- **Diabetes or circulation problems**
- **Aging** (nails grow slower and thicker with age)

SYMPTOMS

- **Discolouration:** - Nails may turn white, yellow, brown, or black
- **Thickened nails**
- **Brittle or crumbly texture**
- **Distorted nail shape**
- **Separation of the nail from the nail bed (onycholysis)**
- **Odour or debris under the nail in some cases**

TREATMENT

- **Topical antifungal treatments:** Best for mild or early infections
- **Nail debridement:** Trimming or thinning the nail by a Foot Health Professional
- **Oral antifungal medications** (e.g. terbinafine or itraconazole): Often required for more severe or persistent infections
- **Laser therapy:** A newer option with mixed results
- **Surgical removal** (rare, for severe cases)

PREVENTION

- **Keep feet clean and dry**
- **Wear breathable shoes and moisture wicking socks**
- **Don't share nail clippers or footwear**