



Grant Gonzalez, DPM

A New Battle Plan for Ending Toenail Fungus!

By Grant Gonzalez, DPM

Toenail fungus, medically known as Onychomycosis, (on-ee-ko-me-KO-sis) is a one of the more common foot problems that plague over 40 million Americans. Every day we see toenail fungus commercials on the television, internet and social media platforms, radio, and in print. Even our highways are plastered with ads. Unless you have been living with this condition, you are not likely to pay attention to all the ad campaigns that claim to offer the best solution to this problem.

“The good news is that toenail fungus can be managed and cured in the majority of cases.”

I am sure everyone with toenail fungus wishes there was a fast remedy, but there is no quick fix with over-the-counter topical creams, prescription lacquers, or oral medications. It is a long, tedious process that works less than half the time. In fact, buyers must beware because many ads are misleading. Efficacy rates are not always accurate, risks have a tendency to be minimized, and superiority claims are usually unsubstantiated.

The good news is that toenail fungus can be managed and cured in the majority of cases. Some podiatrists are using a more synergistic approach to ensure success. Here is an innovative treatment protocol that is achieving high efficacy rates:

Confirm the diagnosis

While fungus is a common cause of discoloration and thickening of toenails, there are several other conditions that can present similarly. These include persistent trauma, psoriasis, or eczema among others. Toe contractures (also known as hammertoes) can cause the toenail to persistently contact the ground and cause nail changes. In some cases, nail clippings or debris form under the nail has to be sent to a laboratory for confirmation. If the fungal infection is present, your podiatrist can and work with you to begin appropriate therapy.

Antifungals

When a fungal infection is confirmed, you and your podiatrist can decide on using a combination of both oral and topical antifungals. These can begin safely fighting and killing the fungal infection and start you on your way to clear, healthy nails.



Laser the fungus away

A very effective tool in the armamentarium (ar-ma-men-tar-i-um), or collection of resources available to combat this condition, is laser technology. Some high-powered lasers can kill the fungus instantly. This completely safe treatment heats up the nail, and one to three treatments are normally prescribed to kill any residual fungus as the toenails clear over time. Treatments are generally pain free, drug free, quick, and safe.

Don't live with ugly nails

A KeryFlex Nail Restoration™ process is being used in conjunction with laser treatments to provide natural looking nails while the nails are growing out during a typical six to 12 month period. This process applies a special resin on top of the existing nail which is hardened with a UV light to form a natural looking nail. The resin contains an antifungal agent and prohibits fungus from re-entering the nailbed. This process allows the patient to walk away from laser treatment with natural looking nails. KeryFlex™ treatments are repeated until the fully formed new nails are cleared. Patients are able to end the embarrassment of ugly toenails instantly.

Eliminate sources of reinfection

There are several common organisms that cause toenail fungus, and they also can subsequently cause athlete's foot, which is a fungal infection of the skin of your feet, which commonly affects the soles and spaces in-between toes. Not treating an accompanying skin infection can allow cross contamination of the feet and nails, and can cause reinfection and return of toenail fungus. Treating athlete's foot with a formidable antifungal cream can give you a leg up in the fight against toenail fungus and prevent a frustrating recurrence.



Your podiatrist can also provide you with other tips to lower the risk of reoccurrence and to eliminate existing fungus. Some of the tips will involve changes in clothing, grooming, sharing products, avoiding public places that harbor fungus, changing eating habits, and new cleanliness practices.

Stay toenail fungus-free forever

Fungus is everywhere, but tends to thrive in warm, wet, dark places, such as your shoes. Since we often perspire into our shoes and rarely give them time to air out, fungus can grow rampant and cause reinfection of toenails even after successful treatment. A great way to eliminate this mycotic propensity is to use a device known as a Sterishoe™. This UV light powered device can completely eliminate all fungal and bacterial colonization from your shoes in as little as 15 minutes, and allow you to wear sterile shoes every single day. This device also contains a fan, allowing shoes to dry properly, and it eliminates shoe odor.

In the majority of cases, this synergistic approach will effectively kill the fungus and prevent an agonizing recurrence, pro-

vide instant gratification, and end the embarrassment of ugly toenails, prevent re-infection, and restore the natural beauty of your nails. Getting rid of toenail fungus becomes more important for individuals who are at risk due to poor peripheral circulation, diabetes, undergoing cancer therapy, or for those who have immunosuppressed systems. It also is of greater concern for those who want to reduce the spread of infection among household members.

Conclusion

Toenail fungus can be a frustrating medical problem to eliminate. Teaming up with a podiatrist who uses a synergistic approach to combat this condition will give you a fighting chance for success. If you are tired of living with embarrassment and ugly toenails, call the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois/Illinois Laser Center at 217-670-2160 for a consultation. To learn more about laser treatment and the KeryFlex Nail Restoration™ process, visit myfootandanklecenter.com. Short videos are available to view both processes and to listen to patient testimonials.

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