

Nail Fungus: FAQ's

I have discolored nails. How do I know for sure if I have nail fungus?

The only way to know for sure is to visit your podiatrist. Some signs and symptoms you may be on the look out for are discolored and misshapen nail, foul odor, thickening or brittle nails, and sometimes there may be pain. Take a picture and write down your symptoms and share them with your podiatrist during your appointment.

Most fungal infections tend to be obvious. For fungal infections that are not so obvious, we perform what is called PCR, which stands for polymerase chain reaction tests. A PCR test will analyze samples of fungus DNA, which then tells your podiatrist that you have a fungal infection.

I'm interested in oral medication as treatment, but why do I need to have my blood drawn every month?

Oral medications can become toxic to your liver. In order to make sure you are receiving the right dose and to ensure that your liver is functioning properly while on oral medication, you will have to come to the office at least once a month to have blood drawn so we can monitor your liver function. If you have concerns having blood drawn, you may want to consider laser nail fungus treatment, which your podiatrist will be happy to discuss with you at your appointment.

I am interested in the laser nail fungus treatment, but is it safe and will it burn?

It is absolutely safe! It is FDA approved and we have been having very successful outcomes here at Emerald Coast Podiatry. The highly popular treatment is usually completed in three 20 minute sessions over the course of 3 months, with additional treatment at 6 and 12 months if needed. It does not burn and it is pain free. The laser is a beam of light that specifically targets the nail fungus and destroys it. This kills the fungus and allows you to keep the nail. No surgery, no medication, no recovery time. The procedure is performed right here in our office.

I have been trying to use topical medication for my nail fungus and it has not been helping. Why is that?

Prescription topical medication can take a long time to treat the fungus and eliminate it. The problem with topical medication is that it can take up to an entire year or more to fully treat the nail. Even then, the fungus may return. The nail becomes thick when you have nail fungus and this becomes a barrier between the medication and the fungus. You may still lose the nail, which can take up to another year or more to regrow. When you have your appointment with your podiatrist at Emerald Coast Podiatry, we will go over all of your options with you regarding your treatment.

I keep my feet clean so how did I get nail fungus in the first place?

It is possible for anyone to get fungus on their nails. Fungi are microscopic organisms that can thrive in almost any condition. They tend to live in warm places, such as showers, hot tubs, and swimming pools. Many women are often surprised that they get nail fungus from their pedicure spa treatments. Often, you have very tiny cuts on your toes, feet, or nails that you will not even notice and that is all it takes for the fungus to enter and begin to cause what you now see as your nail fungus.

Is nail fungus contagious? Can I spread it to my family?

Yes. If you are in close contact with other family members and tend to share items, such as shoes, it can be passed from one person to another. You can also lower your chances of developing a fungal infection by wearing shoes in public places, especially beach showers and bathrooms. If you believe you have a fungal infection, call our office to set up an appointment so treatment can begin as soon as possible.