

## Fungal Nail Infections

### **What is a fungal nail infection?**

A fungal nail infection occurs when fungus attacks the fingernails, toenails, or the skin under the nails, called the nail bed. Fungi can attack your nails through small cuts in the skin around your nail or through the opening between your nail and nail bed.

### **What causes a fungal nail infection?**

Mold, yeasts, and different kinds of fungi can cause fungal nail infections. Fungi will best grow in warm, moist places, and can be spread from person to person. Fungal nail infections can be contracted by walking barefoot in public showers and pools, and by sharing personal items, such as nail clippers.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Nails with a fungal infection will get noticeably thicker, and begin to discolor. Nails will usually turn white or yellow, become brittle and split, and it may separate from the skin.

If you have a fungal infection, it can be uncomfortable and painful to wear shoes or stand for long periods of time. The fungus could also spread to your other nails or your skin. Untreated infections can lead to permanent damage to your nail or nail bed.

### **How is it treated?**

It may be in your best interest to have a medical doctor diagnosed and subsequently treat the infection. You may use nonprescription antifungal cream, and lotions, however, your doctor will be able to prescribe stronger medications if needed.

### **How can you prevent a fungal nail infection?**

Wear shoes that fit well and are not too tight. Feet need to be able to “breathe”. Wear cotton socks and change them if your feet become sweaty. Always wear shower sandals or flip-flops in public areas such as locker rooms or showers.

**Fungal Nail infections often will come back even after treatment, so it is important to use preventative measures to ensure that an infection will not return.**