



FUNGAL NAIL INFECTIONS

An Information Pack

Great Dunmow Osteopathy & Health

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A Note from Joe Hellier, Clinic Director

In our experience, fungal nail infections are a problem where people leave it far longer than they need to before seeking proper care. They are common, treatable and yet many people put up with the problem for years, trying home remedies that don't quite solve it.

We have written this pack for the patient who wants to understand what is going on before picking up the phone. It explains what fungal nail infections are, what may be contributing to them, and how our programme treats the problem properly.

There are no costs in these pages and no pressure to book - only the information we believe you need to make a considered decision.

If, after reading, you would like to talk to one of our podiatrists, the details for doing so are at the end.

Joe Hellier

Clinic Director, Great Dunmow Osteopathy & Health



Our Approach to Foot Care

We treat foot conditions the way we treat every area of the clinic: with thorough assessment, evidence-informed care and a clear plan from the outset.

Three principles shape our work in this area:

Proper diagnosis first

We do not begin treatment until we have a clear picture of what is going on. Fungal Nail Infections can sometimes look like other foot problems, and identifying the right cause is the first step. Where appropriate we refer onward - to your GP or another specialist - before, alongside, or instead of treatment with us.

Skilled, evidence-led care

Our fungal nail infections care is delivered by registered podiatrists using the techniques and equipment best suited to the problem. We do not rush appointments and we will tell you honestly if a problem needs a different approach.

Honest, clear advice

You will leave each appointment knowing exactly what we found, what we did, what to do at home and when you need to come back (if at all). Many of the problems we treat resolve in a single visit.



Understanding the Condition

A fungal nail infection (onychomycosis) is an infection of the nail caused by tiny fungi or yeasts. The fungus invades the nail bed and feeds on the keratin in the nail, causing discolouration, thickening and crumbling. It usually affects toenails (warm, moist environment) but can affect fingernails too. It's extremely common and not dangerous but rarely clears on its own.

Early signs are a white or yellow spot under the tip or side of the nail. As it progresses the nail becomes discoloured (yellow, brown, white or black), thickened, brittle, distorted in shape and may lift away from the nail bed. Some people notice a slight odour. The nail rarely hurts unless the infection becomes severe.

How it is diagnosed

Most fungal nail infections can be diagnosed by clinical examination alone. The podiatrist looks at the pattern of discolouration, thickness, location and progression. If there's any doubt or the infection isn't responding to treatment we can take a small nail sample and send it for laboratory testing to confirm the type of fungus and guide treatment.



Contributing Factors

Fungal Nail Infections almost always has more than one cause. Identifying which factors apply to you is part of the work of the initial appointment.

The fungi that cause nail infections live on skin and surfaces around us. They get into the nail through tiny cracks or trauma (stubbing your toe, ill-fitting shoes) and thrive in warm, moist, dark environments like sweaty shoes. Risk factors include athlete's foot, diabetes, age, poor circulation, repeated nail trauma and using shared changing rooms or pool areas.



Three Common Presentations

While every case is different, the patients we treat for fungal nail infections most often present with one of three recognisable patterns. Identifying which applies to you is part of the work of the initial appointment.

Mild Fungal Nail Infection

A small patch of yellow or white discolouration, usually at the tip or side of one nail. The nail is otherwise normal in thickness.

Mild cases respond well to debridement (thinning the affected area) combined with topical antifungal treatment.

Clearance times are quicker than later-stage infections, typically 6 to 12 months as the new healthy nail grows out.

Moderate Fungal Nail Infection

Multiple nails affected, or one nail with significant thickening, discolouration spreading down to the cuticle and some lifting from the nail bed.

We debride aggressively to thin and clean the nail, then start a targeted topical antifungal protocol. Oral antifungals may be discussed via GP referral if the infection is extensive.

Patience is key. Toenails grow slowly so visible clearance takes 9 to 18 months.

Severe Fungal Nail Infection

Thick, distorted, crumbling nails. Multiple nails involved. The nail may have lifted significantly from the bed or have almost no normal nail left visible.

Severe cases usually need a combination approach: ongoing debridement to keep the infected nail manageable, topical treatment, and GP referral for systemic antifungal medication.

Full clearance is possible but realistic timeframes are 12 to 24 months.



Our Programme

Our fungal nail treatment combines expert nail debridement with targeted antifungal therapy to clear the infection at its source.

Initial consultation

You start with a thorough assessment of the affected nails. We examine the extent of the infection, check whether other nails or your skin are involved and identify any factors that may be encouraging the fungus. You'll leave knowing the diagnosis and the right treatment plan for your case.

Treatment course

Nail debridement (thinning and clearing the infected nail) is critical. Without it, antifungal treatments simply can't penetrate the dense, thick nail to reach the fungus.

Review and aftercare

We then prescribe the right topical antifungal protocol for your specific case. For severe or widespread infections we'll co-ordinate with your GP for oral antifungal medication.



Care After Your Appointment

Most of the conditions we see can be largely resolved in one or two appointments. After your treatment we give you everything you need to keep the result and stop the problem coming back.

Immediate aftercare

You will leave with a clear written aftercare plan tailored to your treatment. Most patients walk out comfortably and can carry on with their day as normal. Where a dressing or specific footwear is needed we explain everything and provide what you need to take home.

At-home care

We give simple, practical advice on cleaning, moisturising, trimming and footwear that is realistic to keep up day-to-day. Most relapses come from small daily habits, and a few minutes of the right routine can keep your feet healthy long-term.

When to come back

Some conditions need a follow-up to check progress. Others are sorted in a single appointment and we will tell you so. Many of our patients see us regularly for routine maintenance, especially if they have a condition that tends to recur.



Your Next Step

If you would like to book a podiatry appointment or simply discuss your situation in more detail, you can reach us by phone, email or via the booking page on our website.

All initial enquiries are handled by our clinical team. There is no obligation to book treatment after an assessment, and no judgement if it turns out a different approach is the right fit.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Contact

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