



There are two main categories of fungal infections that can affect the foot. These include fungal infections of the skin, known as tinea pedis and those affecting the nail, known as onychomycosis.

How do you contract fungal infections?

Fungi thrive in warm, moist environments. The infection is spread by spores, which can often survive in harsh conditions. Typically it is contracted from stagnant water in the showers of public pools and gyms. Avoid the spread of infection by cleaning bathrooms well, not sharing towels and wearing thongs in public showers.

What are the signs of tinea?

Different fungi can present in different ways. Some of these are:

- White, maceration in between the toes.
- Small vesicles or blisters on the soles of the feet.
- Red rash patches with dry, scaling skin on the soles.
- Itching.



Treatment of tinea

The main aim of treatment for tinea is to keep the skin dry and treat the infection with a broad-spectrum antifungal ointment. People with the tendency for sweaty skin, are more likely to have recurrent episodes of infection.

- Use Lamisil or antifungal cream for tinea, applying as directed to the foot and between toes.
- Wear cotton or wool blend socks.
- Use Napisan or bleach to wash socks.
- Put shoes outside in direct sunlight to dry or use antifungal spray to disinfect shoes.
- Use Kondi's crystals (Potassium Permanganate), put enough crystals into a basin of water to make the water turn pink. Don't put too much in as this will stain your feet! Make up a solution to use for the whole week, then discard. Soak feet after work for 5–10 minutes, daily for 1st week and then every 2nd or 3rd day for the following week. Repeat as necessary.



What are the signs of a fungal nail infection?

A fungal nail infection typically presents with white and yellow discolouration, but can vary to brown. The nail often becomes thickened and crumbly. It may lift up from the nail bed underneath, and occasionally shed off. The nail then will regrow, usually with the infection present.

Treatment

The time taken to clear a fungal nail infection is dependent on the rate of growth of the nail itself. All treatments will stop the spread of the infection to the new nail, but we have to wait for the nail to grow out to be infection free. This can take 6 to 12 months for the nail to grow from base to tip. Not every fungal infection will respond to one treatment.

Your podiatrist will recommend the best treatment option for your situation.

- Topical treatments include 100% tea tree oil, Gordochem and Loceryl nail lacquers.
- Oral antifungals may be used in chronic, wide spread infection, which has failed to respond to topical treatment. This treatment is only available on prescription by a GP.

Please note: The information in this document should not be used as a substitute for podiatric or medical attention.