

Toenail Fungus: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

A toenail that is infected by a fungus usually turns white or yellow. As the fungus spreads, the nail turns a darker color and gets thicker, and its edges start to turn ragged and crumble. A bad infection can cause toe pain, and the nail may pull away from the toe.

Toenails that are exposed to moisture and warmth a lot are more likely to get infected by a fungus. This can happen from wearing sweaty shoes often and from walking barefoot on shower floors.

It is hard to treat toenail fungus, and the infection can return after it has cleared up. But medicines can sometimes get rid of toenail fungus for good. If the infection is very bad, or if it causes a lot of pain, you may need to have the nail removed.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you have any problems with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- If your doctor gave you a cream or liquid to put on your toenail, use it exactly as directed.
- Wash your feet often, and wash your hands after touching your feet.
- Keep your toenails clean and dry. Dry your feet completely after you bathe and before you put on shoes and socks.
- Keep your toenails trimmed.
- Change socks often. Wear dry socks that absorb moisture.
- Do not go barefoot in public places.
- Use a spray or powder that fights fungus on your feet and in your shoes.
- Do not pick at the skin around your nails.
- Do not use nail polish or fake nails on your toenails.

When should you call for help?



Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Red streaks leading from the site.
 - Pus draining from the site.
 - A fever.

- You have new or increased toe pain.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd>

Enter **D202** in the search box to learn more about "**Toenail Fungus: Care Instructions**".

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