

Fungal Infection of the Skin

Fungal infection of the skin of the feet (Athlete's Foot) is extremely common. It often presents on the soles of the feet and in between the toes. Skin can become very dry, flaky and itchy. Sometimes the skin can become sore and weepy.

It is caused by fungi, called dermatophytes which normally live on the skin and nails. You can catch a fungal infection by direct contact with an infected person, or standing on a surface which is contaminated, such as showers /changing room floors. The fungus thrives in dark, warm, damp environments, inside footwear is ideal. If left untreated the infection may spread to the nails.

How to treat a fungal skin infection

- Wash and dry feet thoroughly every day, especially between the toes.
- Apply anti-fungal treatment daily to skin of both feet.
- Wear clean socks/hosiery daily.
- Alternate footwear-so allowing to dry out between wearing.
- Do not share towels/socks or footwear.
- Wash socks/hosiery/towels over 60 degrees to kill any fungal spores.
- Spray anti-fungal treatment into all footwear.
- You may need to continue with treatment, even when symptoms have cleared.

It is important to consult a HCPC registered podiatrist for an assessment and diagnosis before beginning any medications/ treatments.





Fungal Infection of nails

Fungal spores called 'Dermatophytes' invade the skin under the nail plate. It is slow to develop and usually occurs as a result of untreated fungal infection on your skin.

Fungal spores thrive in warm, dark, damp environments i.e. inside footwear.

Signs of a fungal nail infection may include: a yellow/brown discoloration, thickening/crumbling or brittle nails.

Nails may become mis-shapen or lift from the nail bed.

Factors increasing the risk of fungal nail infection include:

Nail trauma/ biting nails

Medical conditions such as diabetes and psoriasis

Smoking

General poor health/ Poor hygiene

Unclean nail cutting/ filing tools

Sharing socks, towels, shoes or nail cutting tools

Can you treat a fungal nail?

It is important to remember it is extremely difficult to clear a fungal nail infection.

Various topical and oral treatments are available, which can be discussed with your podiatrist.

Issues such as psoriasis/ trauma, use of nail polish and even certain medications can cause a nail to appear fungal when it is not.

If you are considering treatment of a fungal nail infection, it is recommended to have a sample of the nail tested for the presence of fungal spores first.