

## **Onychomycosis- Fungal Nails**

Onychomycosis is a chronic fungal infection of the nails caused by dermatophytes (fungal Hyphae).

### **What is it**



### **Why did I get it?**

- The fungal spores like warm, humid environments
- Dermatophyte fungi live on the nail plate and repeated minor trauma permits the fungal organism to invade the nail plate and become established
- Tight occlusive footwear causes crowding of the toes, promoting fungal infection
- Communal showers, where untreated fungal organisms can spread rapidly
- Occupations requiring constant hand washing
- Diseases that influence local and systemic immunity can predispose to onychomycosis, including diabetes mellitus, HIV, and peripheral ischemia

### **Symptoms:**

One or more of the following symptoms can be observed:

- Thickened or brittle nail
- Scaling under the nails
- White or yellow streaks on the nail
- Flaking white areas on the nail's surface
- Appearance of yellow spots at the bottom of the nail
- Distorted nail

### **How is it diagnosed?**

In some cases physical exam alone is enough to identify a fungal nail. However in some cases physical exam is unreliable as there are so many conditions that can make nails look damaged. A nail sample can be taken from your podiatrist to be sent away for laboratory testing.



PODIATRY  
MACKAY

**Possible treatments:**

Topical antifungal treatments are the most common form treatment. There are oral anti fungals prescribed by a doctor but can only be taken for a certain period of time. Have you nails cut and thinned down by a podiatrist will allow better absorption of topical treatments. Treatment is a lengthy recovery and can take up to and over a year, photos taken of the condition of your nail are helpful in ensuring treatment is successful. Sometimes you will need to change anti-fungal treatment.