

LASER TREATMENT OF FUNGAL TOENAILS

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Do you or someone you know have yellow, discolored toenails? Have you been treated for fungal nails and failed treatment? Have you refused treatment for fungal nails because of potential harmful side effects or contraindications with your medicines?

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions there is a new exciting treatment for fungal toenails. Laser treatment is the newest and most effective treatment with comparable results to oral medications and without any side effects or contraindications.

Toenail fungus is an infection of the nail. The onset is often slow, associated with athlete's foot and asymptomatic. The infection will most commonly be found in the big toe, but in some cases all 10 toes may be affected.

Toenail Fungus Symptoms include:

- Yellow toenails
- Hardening or thick toenails
- Foul smells rising from toenail
- Toenails that appears to be crumbling
- Splitting of the nails
- Pit marks of the nails
- Tenderness in the toe
- Pain, ranging from mild to severe, or constant to intermittent
- Appearance of debris building up under the infected nail

What Causes Toenail Fungus?

Toenail fungus can be caused by many different things including improper footwear, especially tight fitting shoes, medical conditions such as diabetes, immune diseases and other circulatory conditions, unsanitary pedicures or toenail polish applied in layers, hosiery, socks and shoes that do not breathe and age.

Fungal infections in the nails are typically caused by a group of fungi called dermatophytes. However, yeasts and molds can also cause toenail fungus. A person can contract toenail fungus by using shared showers, locker rooms, gyms and other warm, damp places, including home showers that are shared by multiple family members.

Who is at risk?

It is estimated that 10 to 12% of the adult population is affected worldwide. Older people have a higher rate of toenail fungus, with an estimated 20% of the population aged 60+ and 50% of people aged 70+. Toenail fungus is present in approximately one third of people with diabetes mellitus. It is a significant predictor of foot ulcers and can be clinically serious.

How is it treated?

Traditional methods of treatment include topical creams, lacquers and oral medication.

Topical creams/lacquers are applied to the nail and surrounding skin daily. These treatments have limited success due to the patient compliance and the creams limited ability to penetrate the nail bed effectively.

Oral medications have a higher success rate, but not without potential risks. Patients taking oral medication for toe nail fungus should consult with their podiatrist on their alcohol intake and should have regular liver function tests to ensure their liver function isn't adversely affected.

Laser technology has been used to treat toe nail fungus for decades. However, recent advances in lasers have seen a significant increase in patient and physician demand for this procedure. Laser is fast becoming the preferred method of treatment as it is safe and effective with a 70 to 100% reported success rate on mild to moderate toenail fungus.

How does laser treatment work?

The treatment is fast and will take your doctor approximately 20 minutes to perform. The treatment is very tolerable, requires no anesthesia or numbing medicine, and there is no downtime following the procedure.

Laser treatment is a very safe and effective procedure that does not require a lifestyle change or regular blood tests to monitor liver function. Unlike systemic oral medications, laser therapy is targeted directly at the infection. Unlike topical treatments, laser therapy is able to penetrate the nail plate to get to the fungus. After 3 to 6 months healthy, a clear nail grows out.

Granite State Podiatry is proud to announce that we now provide this exciting new technology. Initial consultations are covered by most insurance plans. Although laser treatments are not currently reimbursed by private insurers, we offer multiple payment options to make this modality more affordable and available to a greater number of people. If you would like more information, please call us at 668-3509, or visit us on our website, GraniteStatePodiatry.com.



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