

PATIENT EDUCATION · SKIN & NAIL CONDITIONS

Fungal Toenails

Fungal toenails (onychomycosis) are a fungal infection of the nail and nail bed, causing nails to become thick, discolored, brittle, or crumbly. The same fungus that causes athlete's foot often invades the nail, where it is protected and harder to treat. Fungal nails rarely improve on their own, and over-the-counter products seldom reach the infection. Confirming the diagnosis matters — several other nail conditions look identical — and prescription treatment offers the best chance of clear nails.



For educational illustration only.

At a Glance

Focus area	Skin & Nail Conditions
Goal of care	Fungal toenails (onychomycosis) are a fungal infection of the nail and nail bed, causing nails to become thick, discolored, brittle, or crumbly.
Where it's provided	In our office or a surgical center, based on your evaluation and what is clinically appropriate.
Your next step	A consultation with Dr. Stephen Wigley IV to review your symptoms and options.

Who May Benefit

- Anyone with thick, discolored, or crumbly toenails
- Patients embarrassed to wear sandals or show their feet
- Patients with diabetes, for whom thick nails raise ulcer risk

When to Seek Care

- Nail thickening, yellowing, or white/brown discoloration
- Nails that are brittle, crumbly, or lifting from the nail bed
- Pain or pressure from thickened nails in shoes
- Any nail change if you have diabetes or circulation problems

How We Evaluate

- Examination of the nails and surrounding skin
- Testing to confirm fungus before committing to treatment
- Assessment of contributing factors like athlete's foot

Treatment Options

- Prescription topical antifungals for select cases
- Oral antifungal medication — the most effective option for many patients
- Professional nail debridement for comfort and appearance
- Treatment of co-existing athlete's foot to prevent reinfection

What to Expect

1

A confirmed diagnosis before treatment

2

A realistic timeline — nails clear as they grow, over months

3

Prevention strategies to protect the new nail

Common Questions

Why don't drugstore products work on my nails?

The infection lives under and inside the nail, where over-the-counter products can't penetrate well. Prescription treatments — especially oral medication — reach the infection far more effectively.

How long until my nails look normal?

Toenails grow slowly. Even with successful treatment, expect 9-12 months for a fully clear nail to grow out.

Sources & Further Reading

- American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons — FootHealthFacts.org
- MedlinePlus, U.S. National Library of Medicine — medlineplus.gov
- American Academy of Dermatology — aad.org

Questions? Call Wigley Feet at (305) 895-9528 to schedule an evaluation. New patients can also request an appointment at www.wigleyfeet.com.