



Physician to Physician

From Fungus to Fabulous

February 2016

Dear Physician,

Thank you very much for your referrals to our office. We love helping your patients restore their active lifestyles. This month I want to speak with you about a hope for toenail and skin fungus.

A Real Problem

Toenail fungus is a very common problem. Best estimates are that 14-20% of your patients have this problem. The health risks are minimal in healthy patients, but in patients with diabetes that have Neuropathy or PVI there is a risk of ulcers under the nails with subsequent gangrene. 36-48% of patients have some pain with the thickness of the nails. Fungus is a major contributor to ingrown nails. But by far the most significant problem associated with toenail fungus is the psychosocial effects. People with fungal issues are embarrassed by the appearance of their feet and nails. They don't wear sandals and avoid social situations where someone might see their feet and nails. Many of them apply nail polish to cover up their discolored fungal nails.

Hard to Treat

Treating nail fungus is a difficult and frustrating problem for both the patient and physician. High frequency of failure of treatment and recurrence are very common. Treatment with oral terbinafine fails 30-50 percent of the time. Liver toxicity may be a concern. Topical medications are largely ineffective after a year of use. Recurrence rates after successful treatment are high.

What about Laser Therapy?

Laser therapy has shown a wide range of effectiveness with toenail fungus. Manufacturers report 70-80% success rate. The bottom line is that it is effective most of the time if used correctly. Enough joules have to be used to cause enough cellular damage to the fungus for it to work. The problem with research is there is a large variation in the dosage to the affected nails so apples are compared to oranges. Lasers can be a very effective tool if used correctly.

What is the Answer?

Fungal infections are tough to cure and require multiple treatment modalities at the same time, over a period of time. At Next Step Foot and Ankle Clinic, we now have a [Five Star Fungus to Fabulous Approach](#). We use oral medication, topical medication, silver and antifungal spray in shoes, antifungal cream on the skin of the feet and nails, and laser therapy all at once. With this approach close to 90% of our patients show significant improvement within 3 to 6 months.

So if you have a patient-- adult or child-- who has skin or toenail fungus, please refer them to us for help. **Call (830) 569-3338.** Let us help your patients get ready to bare their feet this summer!

Yours in Good Health,
Darren J. Silvester

Skin Fungus (Before)



Skin Fungus (After)



Toenail Fungus (Before)



Toenail Fungus (After)

