



Beauchamp  
Foot Care



*Guide to*  
**Treating  
Toenail  
Fungus**



We want all our nails to look like this...

But something is stopping them!



### *On-y-cho-my-what?*

Some people are prone to developing toenail fungus more than others, and it can be distressing as it's unsightly and could be embarrassing. If you think you might be suffering from toenail fungus, then you may have onychomycosis (pronounced on-ee-cho-my-co-sis), the medical term for toenail fungus. So, what causes toenail fungus, and how do you know if you have it?

*Continue reading to de-mystify toenail fungus.*

## What is toenail fungus?

Fungus is an organism that likes to live in warm, cosy, moist areas. For example, sweaty gym socks after a workout would be an ideal home for fungus to live and thrive. (Don't forget to change those socks after every workout!) Toenail fungus also is not biased – it affects people of all ages and ethnicities, but is more common in older people. It also makes friends annually (or enemies, depending on how you look at it) with over 5 million people in the United Kingdom who struggle with toenail fungus.

## What are some symptoms of toenail fungus?

When toenail fungus is left untreated, it settles in to its new home underneath your toenail and re-decorates.

- Toenail fungus will change the appearance of your toes from a beautiful healthy pink to a yellow, brownish discolouration. Even a pedicure may not hide the nasty fungus.
- Toenail fungus thickens the toenail and causes deformity of the nail. Toes are strange looking enough as it is, so having a deformed nail doesn't help things.
- Sometimes toenail fungus can even be painful – both physically and psychologically.



Don't feel like you're a slave to toenail fungus! There are toenail fungus treatment options available out there. Keep reading to see what your options are and your feet could be ready for flip flops again.

### *What are your options for treating toenail fungus?*

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With toenail fungus being such a common problem affecting a large percentage of the population attempts to fight off, remedy and cure this dilemma have produced a few different options for treatment. Unfortunately, there is no magical solution or "cure" for toenail fungus. Luckily, however, it is a condition that can be treated through use of oral medication, topical treatment or laser treatment.



# There are 3 Treatment Options for Toenail Fungus:

## *Oral, Topical and Laser Treatments*

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### TREATMENT OPTIONS OVERVIEW

#### *I. Oral medications*

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This antifungal treatment comes in the form of a pill that is swallowed, with dosage and the type of medication determined by your doctor.

- Often, patients are prescribed these drugs for up to twelve weeks, and results can take several months to see.
- This treatment is found to be successful in 60-67% of patients.

However, liver damage has been identified as the main possible side effect of oral medications, so if you elect to use this option it is important to note that liver function tests are typically required while you are actively using the medication. Patients with liver conditions, heart disease or who are already taking other medications may not be suitable for this type of treatment.

## II. Topical Treatments

When you look at the various options out there for over the counter topical (surface) solutions to treat toenail fungus, you come across those that are of a more medical variety, and those that are more of the “your grandmother’s cure” variety.

Topical treatments can include over the counter lacquers that are applied directly to your toenails, or alternative homeopathic treatments. For the purposes of this document, we will review several of both to give you a clearer picture of what is used most often in the world of topical treatments, and what the efficacy (effectiveness) is of those treatments according to those who are proponents of them.

## III. Laser Treatment

While podiatrists have been treating toenail fungus for decades, only in recent years has a solution come along that is safe and shows great efficacy for patients who are tired of their toenails. There are several types of laser on the market today including *Lunula Cold Laser*, *PinPointe™ FootLaser™*, *CoolTouch™* and *Cutera GenesisPlus™*. The core concept of these lasers is basically the same. They are specialised laser light devices that beam a focused light through the toenail and eliminate the pathogens causing the fungus that lie under the toenail bed. Part of the reason topicals have limited success is that toenails are designed to protect the bed underneath, and this is where the pathogens live. Lasers can beam through the toenail and reach the problem, without damaging the surrounding tissue. As a result, with the pathogens eliminated, the toenail can begin to grow out normally and healthy.



# A Deeper Look at your Options

Now that you have read an overview of the treatments, let's dig a little deeper and look at what your options really entail.

## 1. Oral medications

Oral medications are a common option for toenail fungus treatment. Although not always as effective as other treatments available, many people prefer to try an oral medication because it is less costly and seems less threatening than other options out there. A doctor is likely to prescribe the most common oral medication, Lamisil.



# How oral medications work

Oral medications attack and kill the fungus by entering the blood stream and slowly acting on the infected portion of the nail. There are advantages and disadvantages to oral toenail fungus treatments that you'll want to make sure you know about before taking a pill.



## Advantages

- Lamisil is NHS approved for treatment of toenail fungus
- Available on private prescription or through the NHS
- Many patients begin to see healthier nails in 3 months

## Disadvantages

- Skin rash may occur
- Potential liver damage if not taken under careful medical direction
- Remembering to take a pill daily
- Possible recurring infection
- Gastrointestinal problems reported (diarrhoea, abdominal pain, indigestion)



## Results

People with very serious nail infections often benefit from taking an oral medication like Lamisil. However, although many doctors prescribe Lamisil it can have serious side effects and needs to be taken daily for six to 12 weeks. Based on a clinical study in the USA, Lamisil has a 59% success rate and it often doesn't kill the toenail fungus completely.

## II. Topical solutions

When you look at the various options there are for over the counter topical solutions to treat toenail fungus, you come across those that are of a more medical variety, and those that are more of the "your grandmother's cure" variety.

Each of these treatments has their own websites and claims (except for grandmother's unless yours is ultra progressive!) and of course each one claims to be the best.



Often they use a combination of homeopathic remedies, including tea tree oil as a key ingredient. We will highlight just three, though there are many others that claim they have some effect. Zetaclear®, Funginix™ (formerly Fungisil) and Nail-Rx™. We will note that while they imply that the cure will happen quickly, most of the sites offer 1 month, 3 month and 6 month supplies, thereby suggesting that the treatment may be more extended than initially indicated. Additionally, it is likely that the effectiveness of certain topical treatment is related to how severe the case of fungus is, with milder cases responding well, and tougher cases needing alternative solutions. In any case, below are three of the current most popular topical treatments:

### Zetaclear®

According to their website, Zetaclear® is a unique topical AND oral homeopathic combination that can help you regain your beautiful hands and feet. Best of all, you can start seeing a noticeable difference in just a few weeks!

Zetaclear® includes several all natural ingredients including tea tree oil, a well known all natural fungicide that has proven effective against toenail fungal infections. It includes a 2 step process that involves first a “solution” and then a “spray” that follows the application of the solution.

Ingredients include:

- Almond oil – great at soothing dry cracked skin, just like the kind associated with fungal infections
- Jojoba oil – also good for promoting skin health
- Vitamin E - An excellent antioxidant
- Lemon grass oil – Promotes skin and nail health
- Undecylenic Acid – Again, promotes healthy skin
- Clove Oil – A natural analgesic



One site we reviewed hailed Zetaclear® as the number 1 topical treatment for toenail fungus, especially because it comes with a money back guarantee, but the studies on efficacy are still being performed.

### **Funginix™**

Funginix™ is another over the counter topical treatment that is used by many. According to their website "FUNGINIX™ is the most sophisticated and complete topical treatment created to fight and eliminate the fungal infections of the finger and toe areas including regions under and around the toenails. Only FUNGINIX™ has been thoroughly tested to guarantee that it kills fungus and will promote the restoration of healthy nails in a fungus-free environment. FUNGINIX™ contains the unique combination of proven anti-fungal agents along with a proprietary blend of natural oils and minerals that will destroy the fungal agents and specifically attack the fungus where the infection exists."

Some boast a 97% success rate with this treatment, and while that may be the case, most podiatrists around the UK seem to agree that topical treatments are not quite as solid as they appear. The website does offer ongoing nail care products and their solution comes with its own money back guarantee.

### **Nail-Rx™**

Our third over the counter topical medication is Nail-Rx™ which is also full of natural ingredients to address the problem. Tea tree oil is the active fungicide, and the blend also includes lavender, lemon grass and clove oil. According to their website Nail-Rx™ is a 100% safe and effective natural remedy for

supporting nail health, helping to keep the nails problem-free. Combining 100% pure essential aromatherapy oils extracted from plants, Nail-Rx™ is highly concentrated and gets to work quickly without risk of side effects.

### Grandmother's remedies

Of course, on top of all of the prescribed over the counter options, you won't have to go very far in a conversation about toenail fungus before somebody will offer up a sentence that starts something like this: "Well my grandmother always said the best way to treat toenail fungus is....." and then you fill in the blank from there. From a specific combination of herbal remedies, to applying straight tea tree oil, to soaking your feet in beer (many would call that a waste of a good beer!) the advice is out there! On the bright side, most of these "prescriptions" are fairly inexpensive to try, so your risk is low.



On the not so bright side, there is very little data that provides any consistency for these treatments, so you would be on your own there. Other suggestions include:

- Olive leaf extract
- Oregano
- Echinacea and Goldenseal
- Castor bean oil extract
- Grapefruit seed extract

And the list could go on and on!



### III. Laser treatment – how it works

Many topical and oral treatments exist, but the treatment that produces effective results with the least side-effects is laser treatment. The laser is designed to safely penetrate the surface of the toenail fungus to eradicate the underlying infection. The procedure begins working instantly, with positive results appearing as the toenails grow out. Depending on how long it takes your toenails to grow out, you should see the full effect of a newly grown fungus free toenail in 6-9 months.

Laser treatment for toenail fungus may require several appointments depending on the laser being used, but has the significant benefit of being non-invasive and having no side effects reported when the treatment is overseen by a competent medical practitioner.



The complete effective elimination of the toenail fungal infection, coupled with simple, sensible preventative measures, can help sufferers of even the toughest toenail fungus find relief. There is no recovery period—immediately after the laser procedure, patients can put on socks and shoes, walk out and return to their daily activity.

Toenail fungus laser treatment has been used to help people with recurring toenail fungal infections. Once the problem is gone, as long as you take good care of your nail health, you shouldn't have to worry about it coming back.

While the use of lasers in the treatment of toenail fungus has only been around for less than 10 years, there are now a number of laser products on the market that have conducted studies and have been in use with great success. Some leading brands are Lunula, Cutera®, PinPointe™, and CoolTouch™, and others will be sure to join these as podiatrists move to incorporate laser treatments into their practices across the world.

If you want to eliminate the ugly, embarrassing, and sometimes painful experience of toenail fungus from your life, you should know that laser toenail treatment is fast safe, and effective!



### *Advantages*

- Laser nail fungus treatment is safe. There are no known side effects associated with laser – something that can't be said about prescription medications\*. Treat your toenail fungus without endangering your health.
- The laser provides effective toenail fungus removal. The spores that cause toenail fungus are eliminated at the source. Your new toenails will grow out

pink and healthy. You will have the freedom to wear any type of shoes you like without the fear of embarrassment.

- Laser treatment for toenail fungus makes getting rid of toenail fungus easy! You don't have to take any pills or remember to smear messy cream on your toenails every morning, noon, and night. All you have to do is go to a qualified podiatrist, sit in the chair, and let the laser eliminate your toenail fungus.
- Laser nail fungus treatment provides a nail fungus solution that lasts. Lunula studies report that 90% of patients in the studies had 100% clear nails after 4 treatments and 98% of patients showed improvement.
- Lasers that are being used to target onychomycosis are specially designed medical devices that shine a laser/light beam through your toenail and kill the pathogens that cause toenail fungus.

### *Disadvantages*

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- Laser treatments vary in their price range. They can be anywhere from £500 - £1000 depending on where you live and what type of laser your podiatrist is using for the treatment. However, with a success rate of up to 90%, even on very stubborn cases, the treatment usually yields a solid result.
- While laser treatment is the safest option with the greatest chance of success, it is not usually something that is covered by insurance companies, so that has to be taken into consideration. Although, if you have private medical insurance, you should check with your provider.
- Oral or over the counter medications certainly cost less initially than laser treatment. For very mild cases, over the counter remedies may work fine. It is important to assess, however, how many months it might take to get results.

## Conclusion

Hopefully you are a little bit better informed now about your toenail fungus treatment options. One thing we do recommend is that you get a professional consultation on the best options for your needs. At Beauchamp Foot Care, we believe patients deserve to have the information needed to make good choices about their foot care. Our goal is to educate each patient and begin a relevant treatment programme with the highest quality of care available. Whatever your foot trouble, we'll work together to find the answers that will bring you relief.

Our goal is that you can do the things you love and not be ashamed of how your feet look. So whether you want to wear sandals or just go barefoot, we want you to enjoy life's activities and not have to live in pain or embarrassment.





# Now your next step is to take the above information and run with it!

We couldn't write about toenail fungus without at least one pun about feet! If you are interested in toenail fungus laser treatment, contact us for an initial consultation.

## COME IN FOR A Toenail Fungus Consultation



If you want to learn more about us or about foot care in general, you can visit our website at [www.beauchampfootcare.com](http://www.beauchampfootcare.com) or give us a call on 0800 907 0093 or 020 7225 0794.