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You Decided to Treat your Fungal Nails with an Oral Antifungal. Now What?

Oral antifungal treatment offers the best curative response to fungus nails. Studies have shown a 50% to 80% cure rate in toenails. The length of treatment spans 3 to 4 months, and may need to be repeated 6 months later if less than satisfactory results occur. There are two oral antifungal medications that are acceptable for the treatment of toenails. **Sporonox** is FDA approved only for the treatment of fingernails in the pulse dose regimen, but it is widely used in the treatment of fungal toenails. **Lamisil** is FDA approved for the treatment of fungal toenails, and is the most prescribed oral antifungal at this time.

Like bacterial infections, fungal infections also need a culture to help the physician choose which antifungal offers the best antimicrobial coverage. This culture takes approximately 5 weeks to complete, and may need to be repeated in the event of a negative culture.

Your past medical history, list of medications and allergies may dictate which medication is right for you. If you are on a medication that is contraindicated with an antifungal, ask your primary doctor if you can discontinue that medication while taking the antifungal agent. Medications used for gastro-esophageal reflux disease, acid reflux, or gastric ulcers that require a H2 or proton pump inhibitor such as Pepsid, Tagament, Nexium etc may decrease the absorption rate of the antifungal medication, thus it is recommended that taking the medication with Pepsi or Coke (diet or regular) will help negate this problem.

Sporonox is offered in a Pulse pack. Patients on this medication take 2 tablets twice daily for 1 week, followed by 3 weeks of no medication. This regimen is repeated for three months in a row. ***THIS MEDICATION SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FEMALES CONTIMPLATING PREGNANCY.***

Lamisil is a medication that patients take on a regimen of one tablet every day for 3 months. **NOTE:** Southgate Medical Group requires that blood work is done prior to each month on this medication. Refills will not be given until the blood work is completed. This blood work must be completed approximately 5 days prior to the next month of medication so there is no lapse in medication. A lapse could alter the efficacy rate considerably. ***THIS MEDICATION SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED IN PATIENTS WHO BECOME PREGNANT.***

Podiatric experts recommend combination therapy to improve the "cure rate", thus Dr. Hassenfratz strongly recommends that patients also treat their nails with topical medication. In fact, topical medication may be needed for life to prevent a reoccurrence of this nail disease.

(Revised 12/28/16)