Fungal Foot Infection (Athlete’s Foot)

What is FFI and how can you get rid of it.

Fungal foot and nail infections are by far one of the most common things we see through the clinic.

Patients are often embarrassed by these conditions but they are much more common than they think. If you have a fungal nail or skin infection, you are not alone. Most of us harbour the fungi which cause these infections. Its only when the fungus gets a foot hold (no pun intended) that it becomes a problem.

Fungal infections can affect normal, healthy skin and nail as well as those which have already been damaged by trauma, or other conditions like psoriasis for example. The infection often starts at the free edge of the nail plate, typically the corners first. It tends to moves back (proximally) becoming established within the nail plate.

If untreated the fungal infection will progress relentlessly until it reaches the nail fold, where the cuticle is. As the fungus becomes established the nail normally becomes de-vitalised, discoloured, flaky and can sometimes smell unpleasant.

Diagnosis of fungal infections of skin and nails are made clinically. Sending nail clippings for mycology is less common than it used to be. Occasionally test results are not useful in the diagnosis therefore podiatrists tend diagnose these conditions based on the symptoms and presentation of each case, although we can still perform testing within the clinic if required.

Fungal infection of skin and nail are inextricably linked.

Finally our advice is - don’t be embarrassed about nail and skin conditions of your feet. Ask for a professional opinion and start treatment for them as soon as you can. Remember that they are probably the most common thing we see in practice, and that we can help, even if it takes time.

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