

NAIL HEALTH AND NAIL FUNGUS

The Long and Short of Nails

Our nails serve many important roles. They protect and support the tissues in our fingers and toes. Having nails allows us to scratch an itch. A look at your nails can warn a doctor of an underlying medical condition, such as heart disease or diabetes.

Nail Basics

Nails are essentially hardened skin cells. Made mostly of keratin, a protein found in the skin and hair, nails are made by living cells in the fingers and toes. These living cells begin in the matrix, the hidden (half moon) area under the cuticle. As new skin cells grow in the matrix, the older cells are pushed forward, harden, and form a visible nail.

[Read more about nail health from the AAD website.](#)