Podiatry Service
Fungal Infections

- Tinea Pedis (Athlete’s foot) is a fungal infection of the skin commonly affecting the feet
- Onychomycosis is a fungal affecting the nail resulting in thickening and potential loss of the nail
- Fungal infections are caused by dermatophytes or yeasts which infiltrate the skin and nails and cause some of the symptoms shown below
- Toenails, fingernails and the skin on the hands and feet can be affected

Signs and Symptoms

- Infection
- Redness and inflammation
- Scaling of the skin
- Thickening of the nail
- Crumbling of the nail
- Discolouration of the nail

Causes

- Poor hygiene
- Sweaty feet
- Compromised immune system

Diagnosis

- Diagnosis of fungal infections is normally clinical (i.e. based on signs and symptoms) however and small sample of the nail or skin can be taken and analysed

Medical and pharmacy management

- In the case of fungal nail infections, treatment of athlete’s foot is also advantageous
- Topical nail lacquer such as Amorolofine (Curanail) can be used for fungal nail infections
- Topical creams such as Terbinafine (Lamisil) can be used for athlete’s foot
- Dusting powders for socks and shoes are also available for example Miconazole (Daktarin)
- Topical management takes time and perseverance!
- If topical measures do not work then oral tablets may be prescribed by your GP, such as Terbinafine would be recommended.

Simple measures to reduce the chance of infection

- Good hygiene is an important cornerstone of preventing fungal infections
- Washing and drying well between the toes helps to reduce the build up of fungal debris

Reference: Fungal infections/July 2011
• The use of surgical spirit between the toes helps to keep the area dry
• Thickened nails can be reduced professionally by a podiatrist or filed at home – this will help the topical treatment to penetrate the nail
• When applying moisturiser, avoid putting this between the toes
• Change your shoes everyday and allow each pair to dry thoroughly – damp shoes can harbour fungus and bacteria which increases the chance of re-infection
• Use cotton socks and wash them at 60 degrees to ensure that fungal spores are destroyed and thus preventing re-infection
• Avoid walking barefoot in communal areas
• Avoid sharing towels, socks and shoes

**Important!**

• If you are concerned about a break in the skin or an ulceration then please contact your GP straight away
• Bathe your feet in salt water and cover with a dry dressing
• If you are concerned then seek help

If you have any questions or comments then please contact the Podiatry Service:

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