

Identifying and treating fungal nail infections

Fungal nail infections are common and can affect both fingernails and toenails.¹ Toenails are seven times more likely to be affected than the fingernails, which may be due to their slower growth, reduced blood supply and dark, moist environmental conditions.²

Objectives

✓ **Confidently identify fungal nail infections**

✓ **Learn how Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment (amorolfine 5%) works and how it differs from other products**

✓ **Be able to answer common queries about treating fungal nail infections**

Fungal nail infections can be caused by dermatophyte moulds, non-dermatophyte moulds and yeasts. Around 85-90% of fungal nail infections are due to dermatophyte moulds such as *Trichophyton rubrum*. However, infected fingernails are usually due to yeast infections, with 50% of cases due to *Candida albicans*.³

Fungal nail infections can also occur as a result of an athlete's foot infection spreading to the keratin of the nails. Both infections are caused by the same fungus.

Fungal nail infections flourish in warm, moist and dark environments and can spread very easily. They are more common in men and older people, affecting 20-50% of people aged over 60 years.⁴

Signs and symptoms of an infection

At first, fungal nail infections may not show any obvious symptoms. Typically, they begin at the edge of the nail and spread to the middle. Eventually, the whole nail may be affected.

As the infection progresses the customer may notice differences in their nail, including:

- Discolouration (brown, yellow or white)
- Brittle and break easily
- Thickening
- Pain when pressed against inside of shoe



Not all fungal nail infections cause pain, but many customers will want to seek treatment if concerned with their appearance.^{1,5}



Identifying nail infections in the pharmacy

Diagnosis of a fungal nail infection can be carried out visually. You may be asked by a customer to take a look at their fingernail or toenail to help identify the infection.



OTC treatment

Fungal nail infections will not clear up on their own. Some customers may choose not to treat their nail infection if they are not concerned about its appearance or do not have any symptoms. Those who are concerned by the look of their nails or are experiencing pain may be more proactive in seeking advice and treatment.

What can be used?

A topical treatment containing amorolfine 5% can be recommended, e.g. Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment..

Where should it be displayed?

Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment has recently moved from P to GSL; however, it is still the same product, and currently the only amorolfine treatment available as GSL.* You may decide to place it either behind the counter or for self-selection on a GSL fixture. Having the product in the self-selection area of your pharmacy means that customers can see it when browsing the footcare fixture, giving them a wider choice of options for treatment as well as offering an effective, once weekly product. It contains the same strength amorolfine

and is available to order via the same route as before.

How does it work?

Amorolfine has both fungistatic and fungicidal properties that work to kill the fungal infection.⁶ The topical nail lacquer penetrates the nail plate into the nail bed, so also eradicates fungi beneath the surface.⁷

Who can use it?

- Adults aged 18 years and older
- Those with a fungal nail infection in one to two nails (with no nail matrix involvement).

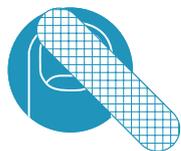
Self-management advice⁸

To help prevent the spread of a nail infection, you can advise customers to:

- Avoid sharing nail clippers with family members
- Keep nails trimmed short and filed down
- Wear cotton, absorbent socks
- Wear well-fitting, non-occlusive shoes
- Wear flip-flops when using communal areas
- Avoid prolonged or frequent exposure to warm, damp conditions.

HOW TO APPLY CURANAIL 5% FUNGAL NAIL TREATMENT

1



File down the nail using the nail file supplied in the box.

2



Cleanse and degrease the nail using the cleaning swab included.

3



Using the reusable spatula, apply the nail lacquer to the entire surface of the affected nail. The reusable spatula can be cleaned with the cleaning swab used earlier.

4



Allow the nail to dry for three minutes.

5



Cosmetic nail varnish can be applied 10 minutes after the nail lacquer. Remove nail varnish before repeat application.

6



Repeat steps 1 – 5 every week until fungal nail infection clears.

What are the potential differential diagnoses?⁹

Yellow nail syndrome

- The nail plate is discoloured to a green-yellow
- The nails are hard and may shed
- The nails may also be hypercurved



Bacterial infection (paronychia)

- Nails may turn black or green
- There may be pain and swelling at the base of the fingernail and localised pain and tenderness of the nail folds.¹⁰



Trauma to the nail

- The nail may be separated from the nail bed
- There may be white spots on the nail.



Ram's horn nails

- More common in older people
- The nail becomes yellow and thickened from scaling underneath the nail.



When to refer to a GP



- Customers under 18 years old
- Customers with more than two infected nails (or where the nail matrix is infected)
- Customers with diabetes
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women
- If the customer has poor blood circulation in their hands or feet e.g. Raynaud's syndrome
- If the customer has pain or swelling around the nail
- Customers with a nail that is moderately or severely damaged or infected
- Customers with a weakened immune system.

Visit www.curanail.co.uk for more information or stock up now via your local wholesaler

Customer advice



It may be a customer's first encounter with a fungal nail infection, so they may not be familiar with treatment. Here are some common questions they may ask, along with some appropriate answers.

Q I have been using Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment for the last few weeks and the infection is not clearing. Is this normal?

A Nails grow slowly so it may take two or three months before you start to see an improvement. For the infection to clear completely it usually takes six months for fingernails and nine to 12 months for toenails. You can monitor nail regrowth by either taking photos or filling in the diagram in the patient information leaflet.

Q I don't want my fungal nail on show as it's not very nice to look at, can I wear nail varnish?

A Yes, nail varnish can be applied 10 minutes after Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment. Make sure to thoroughly remove it before the weekly re-application of the nail lacquer. You should not wear artificial nails.

Q I forgot to apply the nail lacquer this week, when should I apply it?

A Don't worry if you forget to use the lacquer exactly a week after the last time.

When you remember, use the treatment again, in the same way as before. You could use a diary or a reminder on your phone to help you remember.

Q This product is a bit pricey, can I get it on prescription?

A NICE guidance advises that, if topical treatment is appropriate, amorolfine 5% nail lacquer should be purchased over the counter.⁸

Q I was using Loceryl from behind the counter – is this different?

A No, Loceryl has been rebranded to Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment – the product is the same as before, and available for self-selection.

Q How many bottles of Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment will I need?

A This depends on the nail growth and severity of the infection. It is important to keep using it until healthy nails have grown back.

Self-test questions

1. How long can it take to clear a fungal toenail infection using Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment?

- a. 6 months
- b. 2 or 3 months
- c. 9 to 12 months

2. How long after application of the nail lacquer can nail varnish then be applied?

- a. 10 minutes
- b. 3 minutes
- c. 5 minutes

3. Which customer can be treated over the counter with Curanail 5% Fungal Nail Treatment?

- a. A man who is in his 20s, with one infected toenail
- b. A woman in her 30s, who is pregnant and has one infected nail
- c. A 16 year old boy with two infected toe nails

Answers at the bottom of the page

Pharmacy professionals: You can use this learning as part of your revalidation.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fungal-nail-infection/>
 2. <https://cks.nice.org.uk/fungal-nail-infection#!backgroundSub>
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- All online references last accessed September 2019
Date of preparation: September 2019 CUR19-09-0032

Product Information. Presentation: Curanail 5% Medicated Nail Lacquer. Contains 5% w/v amorolfine. **Indications:** for the effective treatment of mild fungal nail infection. Contains amorolfine which penetrates the nail, kills the fungus and prevents further infection spreading. Can be used on up to 2 nails. Works underneath nail varnish with just one application a week. **Legal category:** GSL **License Holder:** Galderma (UK) Limited, Meridien House, 69-71 Clarendon Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 1DS, United Kingdom. Information about this product, including adverse reactions, precautions, contra-indications and method of use can be found at <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/9436> For more information visit curanail.co.uk Adverse events should be reported. Reporting forms and information can be found at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard. Adverse events should also be reported to Galderma (UK) Ltd