

Fingernail Infection - Yeast

Definition

- Mild chronic infection of the skin fold next to the fingernail
- The medical name is chronic paronychia

Health Information

Symptoms

- Redness and swelling of nail skinfolds
- Usually involves several fingers and entire nail fold (not just one spot)
- Redness may increase after water contact
- Nail folds may come apart from nail plates
- Pain is mild or absent.
- Pus pockets don't occur
- Chronic problem present for weeks or months
- Mainly occurs in teens and adults

Causes

- Mainly from too much contact with water. Soapy water is even worse.
- In children, often occurs in those who suck their thumb or fingers.
- In older children and teens, usually occurs in those who swim a lot. May also be from water-logged hands from other activities (such as washing dishes).
- Can become infected with yeast
- Much less common than acute bacterial type

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- This is a mild infection of the cuticle (skinfold around the fingernail).
- The cause is usually too much contact in water.
- In older children, swimming or washing dishes are common sources.
- Usually, it can be treated at home
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Steroid Cream:

- Use 1% hydrocortisone cream 3 times per day until it feels better. No prescription is needed.
- Try to keep the area dry. Therefore, do not cover with a Bandaid.

3. Anti-Yeast Cream:

- If redness isn't improved in 2 days, the reddened nail folds may also be infected. Most often, this is due to yeast.
- Use Lotrimin cream. No prescription is needed.
- Put it on the red area. Do this 3 times per day until redness is gone.

4. **Thumb or Finger Sucking:**

- Finger or thumb sucking can cause the cuticle on that nail to become reddened. This can lead to infections.
- These infections can't be cleared up until your child gives up thumb sucking.
- Read about tips for stopping this bad habit.

5. **Prevention of Recurrent Fingernail Infections:**

- After swimming, rinse the hands and use a moisturizing cream.
- For washing dishes or other activities that require contact with water, wear waterproof gloves. Gloves are critical for working with soapy water.
- Try to use soaps only if needed. (Reason: They dry out the cuticle).

6. **What to Expect:**

- With treatment, the redness should go away in 1 week.
- The hands should look normal by 2 weeks.
- If you don't wear gloves, it may never go away.

Call Your Doctor If

- Pus pocket appears
- Redness lasts over 2 weeks
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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