



THE PATHOLASE PINPOINT™ FOOTLASER™

The **Newest** and **Safest Treatment** in the Fight against **Toenail Fungus**

BY PEDRAM HENDIZADEH D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S.

This state-of-the-art treatment therapy uses a laser that passes directly through the nail

Have you ever suffered from toenail fungus? Are you embarrassed to go to the nail salon or go to the beach with friends or family all because of the appearance of your nails? Have you tried medications, only to be frustrated when nothing works? If so, laser therapy could be your answer.

Onychomycosis, most commonly known as a chronic toenail fungal infection, can be very difficult to treat as it grows extremely slowly. The fungal organism that is the source of the problem can only be killed during its growth phase. That is why it can be very frustrating for many dermatologists and podiatrists to treat toenail fungus.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Fungal infections can go unnoticed for long periods of time because there may be no initial discoloration or pain. The infection is a mold that typically occurs when the toenail is exposed to a dark, warm, moist

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environment. A fungal nail infection that is persistent or becomes painful should be treated. Otherwise, it can cause problems and potentially impact the function of the entire foot. The fungus breeds underneath the growing portion of the nail and can occasionally penetrate through the surface of the nail. Studies have shown health-related quality-of-life issues associated with onychomycosis, and it is clear that patient treatment is both necessary and desirable.

A fungal infection is diagnosed by its appearance – a thickening and discoloration of the nail plate as well as a possible foul odor. As the nail thickens, it may lift from the nail bed (onycholysis). Other symptoms include brittleness, chronic in-grown toenails, and debris under the nails. In some forms of fungal nail infections, a black or white, powdery discoloration may appear on the surface of the nail plate.

Toenail fungus can become debilitating, interfering with walking and causing pain from shoe pressure. If the infected toenail is left untreated, further complications may occur. In some cases, the nail can break away from the underlying skin (the nail bed), allowing the fungus to spread to other parts of the foot. Although the degree to which the infection spreads varies from person to person, it is best to identify and treat the problem as quickly as possible.

TREATMENTS

Many treatment modalities have been used over the years. First isolated in 1939, griseofulvin was com-

monly used in the 1960s and 1970s as a first-line treatment for fungal infections. However, due to a significant liver toxicity, it quickly fell out of favor. In the 1980s, topical antifungal medications were frequently used, though these had limited success (less than 10%). In the mid-1990s, oral medications such as terbinafine and itraconazole were used. These newer agents had the

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advantage (over griseofulvin) of reduced toxicity and a shorter duration of therapy. However, results were moderate (approximately 55-65% improvement) and liver toxicity was still an issue. Similar to griseofulvin, terbinafine and itraconazole are still in use today, despite the risk of liver problems.

LASER TREATMENT

Today, there is a new treatment that has been extremely beneficial in the fight against fungus - The

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PathoLase PinPoint™ FootLaser™. This breakthrough technology was introduced nearly 2 years ago and has shown significant success in the treatment of chronic fungal infections. PathoLase, the company that developed this light-based procedure, claims an 88% success rate. The laser, which is now FDA-cleared for the treatment of nail fungus, is a specially designed, patented device that shines through the toenail and vaporizes the pathogens embedded in the nail bed and nail plate.

Upon first hearing of this technology at the 2008 American Podiatric Medical Association Annual Conference, I was immediately interested, especially because there were no other effective treatments available at the time. I was, to say the least, a little skeptical of its efficacy as none of the other treatment modalities have worked well thus far. A close colleague of mine first began using the laser in September 2008. He advised me that the procedure worked well. I asked to see the results after 3-4 months, as it takes several months for the nail to completely grow out. In December 2008, he informed me that the procedure was very successful in treating some of the worst cases of fungal nail infections he had ever seen.

In early 2009, we brought the laser to the Long Island area as well as to our Connecticut offices and have performed the procedure on over 430 patients. We have seen a significant number of happy and very satisfied patients – patients who have been frustrated throughout the years. They found this modality the only effective means in the treatment of their debilitating and cosmetically unappealing condition.

This PathoLase PinPoint™ FootLaser™ is safe, pain-free and performed in one treatment with no need for drugs or anesthesia. This state-of-the-art premiere treatment therapy uses a laser that passes directly through the nail to target the precise infection site. As the laser passes through the nail, it identifies and destroys the pathogens that cause the fungus. The laser does not harm the nail or surrounding skin in any way. Following this procedure, the toenail will eventually grow back new; clear, healthy, and free of any fungus.

The entire procedure takes approximately 30-45 minutes and is performed in the comfort of our office. Approximately 85% of my patients that I have performed the procedure on have been extremely satisfied after one treatment. We have seen such great results that we now have two lasers in our group. Only a small percentage of the patients have needed a second treatment in an attempt to get rid of a stubborn fungal infection. In my experience, overall this is the best treatment to date for this unsightly and painful foot problem.

Feel free to do more research on this topic at www.Greatfootcare.com and www.L1footcare.com. You can also visit www.PathoLase.com for more information on this innovative technology. **IMAGE**