Ringworm - Nail
(Tinea Unguium/Onychomycosis)

A fungal infection of the nail (tinea unguium/onychomycosis) is common. It is common as the visible part of the nail is composed of dead cells which have no blood supply to help prevent infection. It occurs because fungi are everywhere and will pick any opportunity to grow on any dead material.

Because nails are very slow growing they **require up to 2 years** of treatment with anti-fungal medications. The entire nail back to the base is infected. This includes approximately S of the nail which you cannot even see.

If your caregiver has prescribed a medication by mouth, take it every day and as directed. No progress will be seen for at least 6 to 9 months. Do not be disappointed! Because fungi live on dead cells with little or no exposure to blood supply, medication delivery to the infection is slow; thus the cure is slow. It is also why you can observe no progress in the first 6 months. The nail becoming cured is the base of the nail, as it has the blood supply. Topical medication such as creams and ointments are usually not effective. Important in successful treatment of nail fungus is closely following the medication regimen that your doctor prescribes.

Sometimes you and your caregiver may elect to speed up this process by surgical removal of all the nails. Even this may still require 6 to 9 months of additional oral medications.

See your caregiver as directed. *Remember there will be no visible improvement for at least 6 months.* See your caregiver sooner if other signs of infection (redness and swelling) develop.

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