

Are your nails infected?:  
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HEALTH

## Are your nails infected?

Our nails tell the story of our health and therefore it is important to keep them clean all the time. Yet there are various nail disorders that one is unaware of. Let's learn more about them.

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JUST like other parts of the body, nail diseases are equally dangerous and need to be diagnosed well on time. One has to take proper precautions and medications to get rid of nail diseases. Dermatologist, Dr Chiranjiv Chhabra from Skin Alive Clinics said, "Your nails tell a lot about your body. Infections like white spots on the nails can result from trauma and calcium deficiency and slow growing nails can result from vitamin and protein deficiency post viral infection."

**The following are some of the nail diseases:**

Most of the nail diseases are an outcome of poor nail hygiene and constantly wet nails.

**INGROWN NAILS:** nychocryptosis is a nail disease and is also known as ingrown nails. Dermatologist, Dr Ranjan Upadhyay from Desmodern Skin Clinic said, "The nail enters inside the paronychia which leads to the occurrence of such type of a nail disorder. Many times overgrown toe skin can also be mistaken for an ingrown toenail."

Symptoms like redness, swelling and pain can be seen. It is advisable to visit a doctor immediately before it turns into an infection. This nail problem also occurs because of wearing extremely tight footwear for longer durations.

**BACTERIAL AND FUNGAL INFECTIONS:** This is a very common fungal nail disease. It happens because of wearing wet shoes or socks or nil cleanliness of nails.

**REDNESS IN NAILS:** This type of infection is caused due to viruses like bacteria and fungi. The nail folds act as a barrier between the surrounding tissues and nail plate. This disease can be characterised by redness in nails, swelling in nail folds and excruciating pain.

**BRITTLE NAILS:** People having this nail disorder face difficulty in growing nails. The nails chip, peel or split. This indicates that there is less oil and moisture in the nails.

**GREEN DISCOLOURATION:** Pseudomonas is a bacterial infection which occurs between the nail plate and nail bed where the nail shows green discolouration. People often think that if they will cut the nail then the problem will be solved. But the nail grows back in the same colour.

**THICK NAILS:** Onychauxis is a disease in which nails become very thick, rises above the skin level and changes in colour. It also indicates internal disorders and can happen due to side effects of any drugs.

**BEAU'S LINE:** In this, a thick line is evident in the nail which takes place

because of malnutrition, trauma or any illness. It resembles a linear depression in the nail.

It is important to discover and analyse such changes in your nails and immediately get them treated. Dr Ranjan Upadhyay added, "It is important to keep the nails dry and clean all the time as this part of the body gets infected without anyone noticing the change. You may only come to know once the damage is done. I suggest people should eat biotin based vitamins as they help reduce severity of the nail problems."

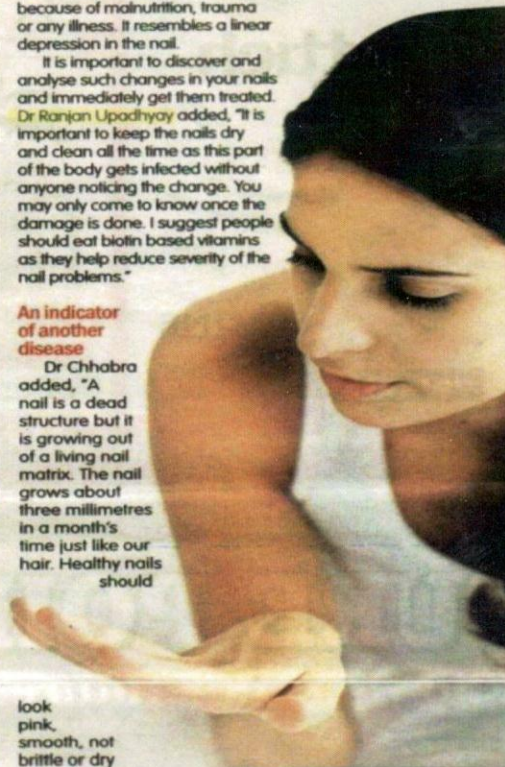
**An indicator of another disease**

Dr Chhabra added, "A nail is a dead structure but it is growing out of a living nail matrix. The nail grows about three millimetres in a month's time just like our hair. Healthy nails should

look pink, smooth, not brittle or dry and should grow regularly."

Vitamin D deficiencies make the nails dry, dark, curved and develop ridges. Iron deficiency results in pale looking nails and in extreme cases the nails can become spoon shaped. Some of the nail disorders also indicate health problems like lung disease, congestive heart failure, liver disease (cirrhosis, liver abscess) and auto immune disorders like systemic lupus erythematosus, alopecia, areata.

Our nails are a mirror to our internal health. One should be vigilant enough to diagnose such changes and visit a dermatologist immediately.



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