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Although it may be unpleasant to look at - and even less fun to admit to others - getting toenail fungal infections is easy and nothing to be ashamed of. Fungus likes to grow in warm, dark, humid places, and since our feet barely see the light of day thanks to our socks and shoes, fungus can sneak up on us without an obvious warning - until it's too late. Unhygienic, uncomfortable, and uneasy on the eyes, toenail fungus can lead to serious health concerns if not treated early on, and the best way to eradicate it is by seeking professional help. If you have or suspect you may have a fungal infection, this should be your first course of action, as some infections can be very difficult to treat on your own. However, prescribed pharmaceuticals require months to take effect, and although there is no solid scientific proof that vinegar cures toenail fungus, there have been numerous accounts of it slowing down the fungal growth and lessening certain symptoms - that is, if the infection is not too severe. People choose vinegar as their go-to fungus remover because of the diluted anti-bacterial acid in vinegar, which helps to kill unwanted infections and restore proper pH levels. In other words, it's an ideal natural remedy, almost custom-fit for the job. How To Use Vinegar for Toenail Fungus The simplest at-home remedy for toenail fungus is a vinegar soak. To prepare for the soak, trim your toenails and ensure that your feet are completely dry. Then choose any kind of vinegar, be it rice vinegar, white vinegar, apple cider vinegar, or another kind - although, the higher the pH level, the better. Take the container in which you'll be soaking your feet and fill it half with vinegar, half with hot water. If you soak your feet in the evenings, you can add a bit of tea tree oil, which is used to cure athlete's foot. Soak your feet in the solution for 10 to 20 minutes twice a day, but never for more than 30 minutes and never more than four times a week, since the acid in the vinegar can irritate the skin. Once you are done, make sure to dry your feet completely before putting on socks or shoes. You should begin to see a difference after a few weeks, depending on the severity of the infection. As your nails start to grow, keep trimming and filing them down until the post of the infected part is gone. Always thoroughly clean your utensils and the area where you soak your feet. Seek medical attention if the symptoms do not improve or if they get worse.

What Are the Symptoms of Toenail Fungus? Some of the symptoms include: Thick nails Yellow lines running vertically along the nail A strange odor coming from the nail Scaling underneath the nail Black or yellow spots Nails falling off (in extreme cases) Brittle nails Yellow spots under the nail How to Prevent Toenail Fungus If the vinegar solution worked for you, here are some tips to help you avoid toenail fungus from returning: After buying new shoes, especially a second-hand pair, always wash them before trying them on, especially if you don't know the previous owner - and especially if you are not sure if they had or have a fungal infection. If they are not the kind of shoe that can be washed or if you need to wear them immediately, spread some talcum powder on the inside of the shoes. Be sure to invest in an anti-fungal foot spray, as you might find at a local pharmacy, and coat the inside of your shoes after they've been washed. This will not only kill existing fungus but also help treat your feet against lingering infection. As soon as you notice that your nails are a little discolored, too soft, too thick, or have white, yellow, or black flakes, go to a doctor. It is better to catch the condition early rather than waiting for it to spread or grow worse. Unlike some illnesses, infection is not the kind you can wait out. If you don't already, begin using sandals while showering. The dirt and grime you wash off your body can stay in a puddle that gathers at the bottom of your shower. If your shower does not have standing water, then be sure to change the mat outside, as you could be obtaining a reinfection by exiting the shower. It may seem like a stretch to take preventive measures in your own bathtub, but as was mentioned before: Fungus almost can sneak up on you when you least realize it. Wear socks constantly when you've walked barefoot around your house, and when you're soaking them, you can either use a foot sock or a towel to keep your feet from getting too hot. Be sure to change your socks every day. For the first month, wear socks actively to prevent the fungus from returning. Have you tried using vinegar for toenail fungus? Don't let summer be a flop because of toenail fungus. Dr. Scott Walter, a board-certified dermatologist near Denver, is sharing two home remedies for the common but mortifying occurrence of mold under toenails. He suggests soaking feet in a blend of equal parts white vinegar, yellow Listerine and water twice a week for 15 minutes and using Vicks VapoRub daily. Dr. Scott Walter is sharing two home remedies for toenail fungus — a vinegar>Listerine soak blend and Vicks VapoRub. TkTKoK / @denverskindor: "Try these two methods!" Walter posted on TkTKoK last week. "But remember toe nails grow slow so 6-12 months is needed to complete treatment." Listerine contains menthol and thymol, which boast antifungal properties, according to Healthline. Walter prefers the yellow version, claiming the green and blue kinds can stain your tub. Vinegar has "also been found to combat some types of foot fungus. Scientific research on these soak ingredients is lacking, but there have been anecdotal reports of their effectiveness. Dr. Abigail Waldman — a dermatologist at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital — recommends mixing one part white or apple cider vinegar with three parts warm water and soaking toes for up to 40 minutes at a time. You can substitute Listerine for vinegar. Waldman warns of increased exposure to fungi in the summer, from getting a pedicure or walking barefoot in locker rooms, spas or near swimming pools. "Feet are more likely to be sweaty and damp, which provides a better environment for the fungi, yeasts and molds that are naturally present on your skin to flourish," Waldman said in the Harvard Heart Letter last year. Prescription drugs such as Lamisil and Sporanox have shown to be effective in treating toenail fungus, but side effects can include diarrhea, stomach pain, mood changes and rarely, liver damage. Getty Images As for Vicks VapoRub, UCLA physicians say it contains camphor, eucalyptus oil and menthol, which may curb the growth of certain fungi. One small study found that Vicks VapoRub "seems to have positive clinical effect" in treating nail fungus. Prescription drugs such as Lamisil and Sporanox have shown success in this task, but there are some drawbacks. The side effects can include diarrhea, stomach pain, mood changes and rarely, liver damage. Meanwhile, Walter's followers thanked him for the advice and shared some go-to remedies of their own. "[Tea] tree oil fixed mine... one crow's foot... 6 months applied every day." "I used a paste of lemon juice and baking soda and saw new growth beginning in 3 days time. After another 3 weeks, the toenail fungus, scientifically known as onychomycosis, is more than just cosmetic concern—it can cause discomfort, discoloration, and thickened nails that are challenging to manage. While many over-the-counter treatments and prescription medications exist, some people are turning to natural remedies like white vinegar for relief. But does this pantry staple hold the key to healthier nails? Let's dive deep into the science and practically behind using white vinegar for toenail fungus. What is Toenail Fungus and Why Is It So Stubborn? Toenail fungus is caused by a type of fungus called dermatophytes. These organisms thrive in warm, moist environments like sweaty shoes and public locker rooms. Once they infect your toenails, they can lead to symptoms like Yellow or brown discoloration Brittle or crumbling nails Thickened nail beds A foul odor in severe cases The stubborn nature of toenail fungus stems from its ability to hide beneath the nail, making it hard for topical treatments to penetrate. This is where white vinegar comes into the picture. Why White Vinegar? White vinegar, also known as acetic acid, is a household staple famous for its antimicrobial and antifungal properties. While its use for cleaning and cooking is well-known, it's also touted as a natural remedy for certain skin and nail conditions. Here's why white vinegar might work for toenail fungus: Acidic Environment Fungus struggles to survive in acidic environments. White vinegar can alter the pH levels around your nails, making it inhospitable for fungal growth. Antifungal Properties Studies suggest that acetic acid has mild antifungal effects, which can help slow down the spread of the fungus. Soothing Effect Vinegar soaks can soften the affected nails and surrounding skin, reducing discomfort and making it easier to trim thickened nails. How to Use White Vinegar for Toenail Fungus: Both white vinegar and apple cider vinegar have been suggested as home remedies for toenail fungus, but there is no clear scientific evidence to demonstrate the superiority of one over the other, says the expert. The acidic nature of both vinegars might create an inhospitable environment for fungi. Some people might have personal preferences or anecdotal experiences regarding one vinegar type over the other, but it is important to remember that these remedies might not work for everyone. The expert says that vinegar might aid therapy, but it is not a complete treatment in itself.Ways to treat toenail fungusOver-the-counter antifungal creams, ointments, or nail lacquers containing ingredients such as clotrimazole, terbinafine, or ciclopirox are easily available. They can be applied directly to the affected nails. Here are some more ways to treat toenail fungus:1. Oral antifungal medicationsIn cases of more severe or widespread toenail fungus, oral antifungal medications might be prescribed. Medications like terbinafine and itraconazole are to be taken for several weeks or months, says the expert. They help to eliminate the infection as new nail growth replaces the infected one.2. Surgical or procedural interventionsIf the toenail fungus is particularly resistant or causes significant nail deformity or discomfort, your doctor might recommend a surgical or procedural intervention. This might involve partial or complete removal of the affected nail, laser treatment or photodynamic therapy. These treatments aim to remove the infected nail and allow for the growth of a healthy nail.It is best is to take preventive measures even after treatment is over so that you don't have to face toenail fungus again. That means keep your feet clean and dry, change socks regularly, wear well-ventilated shoes and avoid walking barefoot in public areas.Disclaimer: At Health Shots, we are committed to providing accurate, reliable, and authentic information to support your health and well-being. However, the content on this website is intended solely for informational purposes and should never be considered a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider for personalized advice regarding your specific condition or concerns.18 Nov, 2024 / By Myrriel N. / Comments Many people turn to vinegar for toenail fungus as a natural remedy, hoping that a simple vinegar soak can kill the infection. But does it really work? In this article, we'll explore why vinegar might not be the best solution and the risks of delaying proper treatment. By understanding these risks, you can make an informed decision about the best way to restore your nail health. The idea behind apple cider vinegar as a remedy for toenail fungus is based on its acidic properties. Many people believe that soaking their nails in vinegar will create an environment where fungus cannot thrive. Yet People Use It Searches for terms like "apple cider vinegar for toenail fungus" and "vinegar soak for toenail fungus" reflect the belief that this simple home remedy is an effective, natural cure. The Reality Unfortunately, while vinegar may slow down fungal growth, it isn't strong enough to penetrate the nail bed where fungal infections live. Without proper treatment, the infection can spread deeper, making it even harder to treat later. While vinegar might seem harmless, using it as a primary treatment for toenail fungus can be risky. Here's why: Surface-Level Treatment Only: Vinegar only affects the top layer of the nail and skin, leaving the deeper infection untreated. Skin Irritation and Dryness: Extended soaking in vinegar can dry out your nails and the skin around them, leading to discomfort or even peeling. Delayed Proper Treatment: Relying on ineffective remedies like vinegar allows the fungus to spread and worsen. The most serious risk of using vinegar is that it delays the start of effective treatment. The longer you wait, the worse the infection can become. Many people who search for "natural remedies for toenail fungus vinegar" aren't aware that by delaying treatment, they risk making their nails more damaged and more difficult to heal. If you've tried vinegar and haven't seen real results, it may be time to reconsider your approach. Ignoring the early signs of fungal infection can lead to a more severe case that requires more aggressive treatment. Why Not Just Soak? Soaking your feet in vinegar might seem like a simple solution, but it's not as effective as it seems. Vinegar is acidic, so it will kill bacteria and fungus.[1] However, this remedy has very limited success because the vinegar can't penetrate under the nail. You can try it if you want to, but visit a podiatrist for further treatment if you don't see any results in 2 weeks. Mix 1 cup (240 ml) of white vinegar in a large bucket. Soak your feet in the solution for 10 to 20 minutes. Place your foot into the bowl and make sure the water covers your infected toe. Then keep it there for 10-20 minutes so the vinegar can soak into the fungus. If you have any cuts on your foot, the vinegar may sting a little. This isn't dangerous. 4 Dry your foot thoroughly when you're done. Fungus grows in moist conditions, so always dry your foot off as soon as you soak it. Take a clean towel and pat your foot dry before putting your shoes and socks back on. Don't use this towel again before washing it because it could spread the fungus. 5 Repeat this soak twice a day until your symptoms disappear. Nail fungus is tough to get rid of, so it'll take a while. Soak your foot with vinegar and water twice every day. If you see some improvement after a few weeks, then you can continue. If you don't see any improvement, then see a podiatrist for further treatment. If your nail grows, trim it back again so the vinegar can reach the fungus. This could take several months to work. If you don't see any improvement, then see a podiatrist for further treatment. Advertisement Unfortunately, home remedies like a vinegar soak don't have a good record for treating nail fungus. This is frustrating, but there are professional options that have much more success. Topical creams may work, but oral medication is most effective for nail fungus. Visit a podiatrist for an exam and follow their instructions to get rid of your nail fungus once and for all. 1 Apply an over-the-counter antifungal cream for an easy treatment. Specialized antifungal creams might work better than a vinegar soak. Try getting some from a local pharmacy and applying it exactly as directed. For many creams, you have to apply them every day for a few weeks at least. Follow the directions and see if this helps the infection clear up.[2] Approved antifungal creams include Amorolfine, Ciclopirox, Eflinaconazole, and Tavaborole. Keep your nails short so the cream can reach the fungus. Creams usually don't work as well for nail fungus because they can't penetrate the nail. Don't be surprised if you don't see much improvement and have to see a foot doctor.[3] 2 Take prescription oral medication from your podiatrist. Oral medication is usually the go-to treatment for nail fungus because it works internally. If your infection isn't clearing up with home treatments, then make an appointment with a podiatrist. The doctor will probably examine your toenail, then prescribe a medication to fight the fungus. Take the medication as directed for 2-3 months to clear the infection entirely.[4] Some common antifungal medications include Lamisil and Sporanox. Don't stop taking the medication early. If you stop before all the fungus is dead, the infection could come back. At the initial appointment, the podiatrist may also trim your nail a bit to remove some of the fungus. This can help, but probably won't cure the infection entirely.[5] Antifungal medications can be powerful, so your doctor may want to test your blood periodically to make sure the levels in your system are correct. Too much could cause liver damage.[6] 3 Try medicated nail polish to penetrate your nail. Your podiatrist may try this approach along with oral medications. A medicated nail polish, usually Penlac, can soak through your nail and treat the fungus. In most cases, you brush it onto your nail and leave it there for a week. After that, you wash it off with alcohol and apply a fresh layer. Continue this application process for as long as the podiatrist tells you to.[7] The application procedure might be different depending on what medication your podiatrist prescribes. Follow the instructions that they provide. Advertisement While vinegar is a common home remedy for fungal infections, it doesn't have a lot of success against nail fungus. Since it can't penetrate underneath the nail, it can't kill the fungus. You can try it if you want to, but you might not see great results. If the infection doesn't show any improvement in a few weeks, then visit a podiatrist for a more conventional treatment. Even with creams and medications, it still might take a few months for the infection to clear completely, so use all these treatments exactly as the podiatrist tells you to for the best results. Add New Question Question I am allergic to powdered detergent. What can I use to wash my clothes? Zora Degrandpre, ND Natural Health Doctor Dr. Zora Degrandpre is a Natural Health Doctor and Licensed Naturopathic Physician in Vancouver, Washington. She is a grant reviewer for the National Institutes of Health and the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. She received her ND from the National College of Natural Medicine in 2007. There are a number of natural, plant-based detergents available. Try using those. Also, put your clothing through a second (or even third) rinse to make certain you have rinsed out all the soap. Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks Advertisement Thanks Advertisement 1 This article was co-authored by Zora Degrandpre, ND. 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