Nail Psoriasis

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Nail Psoriasis Symptoms and How to Manage Them

While psoriasis most commonly affects the skin on the body and scalp, a lesser known form psoriasis affects the nails. Psoriasis of the nails affects both the fingernails and toenails. It causes thickening and pitting of the nails and irregularities in the formation of the nail. By learning more about nail psoriasis, you can recognize the symptoms right away, and learn about effective treatment methods.

Co-occurring Conditions

In most cases, patients with psoriasis of the nails also have skin psoriasis, though nail psoriasis can occur on its own in rare cases. Around 10-55% of people with skin psoriasis also develop psoriasis of the nails. The most common symptoms of nail psoriasis are nail pitting, lines through the nails, white spots on the nail bed, a dip in the nail bed, and in some cases a yellow pus-like substance secretes from the nail bed.

Causes

Psoriasis of the nails is caused by both genetic and environmental factors. It generally runs in families, and if both parents have it there is a 75% chance that the child will develop the condition at some point in their life. While the condition is not contagious, the appearance causes many patients to feel uncomfortable, leading to the negative social effects. Early treatment is key to managing symptoms and preventing further progression.

Treatment

If left without treatment the condition not only progresses, but infection can occur, causing loss of nail or even spreading to other areas of the body. The treatment used depends on your unique case and symptoms, but most people are easily diagnosed by the appearance of their nails. In some cases the doctor may take a biopsy of the nail to identify the condition, but only if symptoms are mild.

There is no cure for this condition, but the overall aim of treatment is to reduce the symptoms, eliminate pain, and get the patient’s nails back to a healthy-looking appearance. Anti-fungal creams are often prescribed for application on the nail bed. Some patients may be prescribed steroids if inflammation is present, while others need shots in the nail bed to reduce flare ups. Additionally, your doctor may reduce swelling and infection by cutting away the infected nail or trimming it back before applying anti-fungal cream to get rid of the infection.

Conclusion

Nail psoriasis is uncomfortable and can be hard on your self-esteem, but with the right medical treatment and education on preventing further flare-ups, you can reduce your symptoms and the impact the condition has on your life.