

Health NEWS & NOTES

Make Sure Your Nails Are Healthy And Beautiful

(NAPSA)—A few steps in the right direction can help you have toes you're proud to show.

First, watch out for nail discoloration and thickening, cracking and crumbling of the nail plate. It could mean a fungal infection of the nail called onychomycosis. Most often seen in toenails, it can also affect fingernails. Nail fungus has been estimated to affect as many as 30 million Americans.

Here are a few tips on both prevention and treatment of nail fungus:

- Keep your nails short, clean and dry.
- Trim them straight across and file down thickened areas.
- Wear appropriate socks. Synthetic socks keep moisture away and may keep feet dryer than cotton. Change socks often.
- Use an anti-fungal spray or powder.
- Wear rubber gloves to protect your hands from overexposure to water. Between uses, turn gloves inside out to dry.
- Don't go into public places with bare feet.
- Choose a reputable manicure and pedicure salon. Make sure that the salon sterilizes its instruments between uses.
- Wash your hands after touching an infected nail. Nail fungus can spread from nail to nail.

Because the infection may be present for years without causing pain, it is easily ignored, allowing the fungus to spread. The result may be pressure-related discomfort and even pain. Especially prone to developing nail fungus: those with diabetes, circulatory problems or immune deficiencies.

These people are often resistant to currently available treat-



Until recently, there were only a few prescription medications available in the U.S. for the treatment of nail fungus. Now, a new, topically applied lacquer that delivers treatment directly to where it's needed is in clinical trials.

ments, most of which, in any case, are only marginally effective. The one available topical lacquer in the U.S. is generally effective in only about 10 percent of patients. An added complication: Long-term therapy with oral anti-fungal drugs may interact negatively with other drugs or adversely affect the liver.

Fortunately, a new drug delivery technology may offer a better treatment option. MacroChem, a specialty pharmaceutical company, is now conducting trials for a topical nail lacquer. It appears to be a well-tolerated, easy-to-use treatment against toenail fungal infections.

Delivered through the nail, EcoNail™ does not interfere with the liver or cause gastrointestinal problems. The lacquer is based on a breakthrough technology known as SEPA® that delivers an active drug, econazole, that penetrates past the nail barrier to eradicate onychomycosis at the site of infection.

More information is available at www.macrochem.com.