



# Health Awareness

## Your Nails May Be Trying To Tell You Something

(NAPSA)—The condition of your nails may point directly toward the condition of your health. If you're in good health, your fingernails and toenails tend to be smooth, somewhat curved and slightly pink in color. Abnormalities in the color, shape or condition of your nails, however, may indicate medical problems of varying severity, according to health experts.

Many dermatologists say they routinely examine patients' fingernails and toenails for a first sign of underlying illness. Because nail discoloration can mean several things about your health, doctors also encourage patients to inspect their own nails from time to time and take note of any unusual changes.

A recent survey of 1,017 adults commissioned by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation and conducted by Roper Starch Audits and Surveys Worldwide, revealed that only 48 percent of Americans know that unexpected physical changes in their nails can signal a significant medical problem including infection, anemia and, in extreme circumstances, even cancer or kidney problems. Furthermore, of those who noticed unexpected changes in the appearance of their nails, a mere 40 percent had them examined by a physician.

Onychomycosis is the most common of nail infections, accounting for approximately 50 percent of all nail problems. An estimated 30 million individuals in the United States suffer from onychomycosis. People with diabetes may have higher rates of onychomycosis, increasing their risk for secondary bacterial infections which can, in turn, cause

Dermatologists and podiatrists say presence of the following nail problems may indicate potential medical conditions:

- A fingernail or toenail that turns red may be a sign that the patient has a fever
- Pale or white nails usually suggest anemia
- Nails shaped like the back of a spoon (or "clubbing") may indicate several disorders, including chronic lung or heart disease, certain forms of cancer and longstanding infections
- If a nail is purple or black it could be a sign of congenital heart disease

*And finally...*

- Thick, discolored, flaky or brittle nails are usually the sign of a fungal infection called onychomycosis. Symptoms may also include the buildup of white, yellow or black debris under the nail plate.



gangrene and foot ulcers.

A more common occurrence in toenails than in fingernails, onychomycosis is also one of the hardest-to-treat forms of dermatological infection because the tiny organisms causing the fungus live deep beneath the surface of the skin. Your doctor can prescribe an oral antifungal treatment such as Lamisil® Tablets (terbinafine hydrochloride tablets), which work in concentrations large enough to attack the fungus from the inside out. More than 21 million patients have used Lamisil worldwide; it is the most frequently prescribed treatment for nail fungal infections in the United States.

Lamisil (terbinafine hydrochloride tablets) Tablets are indicated for the treatment of onychomycosis of the toenail or fingernail due to dermatophytes (*tinea unguium*). Side effects that are generally mild or transient have been reported in patients taking Lamisil. In clinical trials, the most common were headache (12.9%), rash (5.6%) and diarrhea (5.6%). Lamisil Tablets are not recommended

for patients with kidney or liver impairment. Rare cases of liver failure, some leading to death or liver transplant, have occurred with the use of Lamisil Tablets for the treatment of onychomycosis in individuals with and without pre-existing liver disease. All patients should be screened for hepatic function before prescribing Lamisil Tablets. Patients who develop persistent nausea, anorexia, fatigue, vomiting, right upper abdominal pain or jaundice, dark urine or pale stools should be advised to discontinue treatment and contact their physician immediately (see WARNINGS in full prescribing information). Lamisil Tablets are contraindicated in individuals who are hypersensitive to terbinafine. There have been isolated reports of serious skin reactions (e.g., Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis). In such cases, and in cases where liver dysfunction develops, therapy should be discontinued.

For more information about onychomycosis and treatment, call