

Antifungal Nail Treatments

Recommendation

Topical antifungal nail treatments should only be considered if infection is mild and superficial or systemic treatment is contraindicated or not tolerated. In these cases patients should be advised to purchase over the counter (OTC) amorolfine 5% nail lacquer for treatment of a maximum of 2 nails.

The EKPG have reviewed and adopted the PrescQIPP recommendations on the use of topical antifungal nail treatments.

The key recommendations are:

Unsightly nails due to fungal infection are primarily a cosmetic problem. Self-care measures alone (incorporating good nail hygiene) are recommended if the person has few troublesome symptoms.

- The patient should be informed that there is no absolute need for treatment. Discuss possible treatment options including side effects and success rate of treatment.
- Treatment does not always cure the infection. Cure rates range between approximately 60–80%. Treatment that eradicates the infection sometimes does not restore the nail's appearance to normal.
- Topical antifungal therapy offers very little benefit for the management of fungal nail infections. There is limited evidence for efficacy in dermatophyte infections.
- Fungal nail infections are rare in children. Children younger than 18 years of age who require antifungal therapy should be referred to dermatology for confirmation of diagnosis before any treatment is initiated. It is important that children under 18 are not treated empirically/referred for OTC purchase until they have been assessed by a specialist.
- If treatment is deemed necessary, it is important to confirm the diagnosis (positive microscopy or positive culture) e.g. if the condition is severe and debilitating, painful or in patients with peripheral vascular disease, diabetes or those who are immune-compromised.
- If a decision is made to initiate treatment, systemic therapy is almost always more successful than topical treatment in dermatophyte onychomycosis. Systemic terbinafine is the most effective agent, however there is still a 20-30% failure rate. Side effects such as headache, itching, loss of sense of taste, gastrointestinal symptoms, rash, fatigue, and abnormal liver function, can occur. Serious side effects, such as liver failure, are rare.

Approved by: East Kent Prescribing Group (Representing Ashford CCG, Canterbury and Coastal CCG, South Kent Coast CCG and Thanet CCG)

Date: July 2015

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- Topical therapy should only be considered if the infection is mild and superficial or where systemic therapy is contra-indicated or not tolerated e.g. hepatic or liver impairment. In these cases, patients should be advised to purchase over the counter (OTC) amorolfine 5% nail lacquer for the treatment of a maximum of 2 nails.

The full bulletin can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.prescgipp.info/component/jdownloads/send/63-amorolfine-5-nail-lacquer/891-bulletin-55-amorolfine-5-nail-lacquer>

Reviewed: February 2018, just links updated.

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