

Nail Care Information

What causes nail changes?

Nails become more fragile, brittle, and ridged as we all age. People often notice they just don't seem as strong, frequently split, and won't grow as long as they used to. This is, unfortunately, a product of aging and generally not a sign of underlying medical problem or nail infection. Certain nail abnormalities such as indentions or lines across all of the nails may have been triggered by a recent illness and will grow out normally. Artificial nails can also cause a progressive fragility of the nails.

What can my doctor do?

Your doctor will look for any signs of nail infection which include crumbly, thickened, or discolored (yellow, green, or black) nails. An infection can be treated with oral and/or topical anti-fungal treatments, however the age-related changes, such as splitting and fragility, do not respond to prescription treatment.

What can I do?

There are measures you can take at home that many patients find do help improve the strength and appearance of their nails. The products mentioned below can be found at drug stores, pharmacies, health stores, and over the internet.

- Biotin supplements, 2-3 mg daily
- Multivitamin daily taken in addition to following a healthy and well-balanced diet
- Practice good nail hygiene:
 - Keep hands and nails out of water as much as possible. Excess water and soaking of the hands and nails actually worsen fragility and brittleness of nails.
 - Trim nails short with nail clipper straight across. Avoid filing.
 - Nail condition products such as Elon or DermaNail nail conditions daily to the entire nail and cuticle.
 - Avoid picking and “flicking” and nails which can cause the nail plate to separate from the nail bed and further hinder growth and strength.
 - Avoid artificial nails. Polishes are okay but be aware that darker polishes may stain the nail.

What can I expect?

Many patients, but not all, will see some improvement with the above measures. All changes should be implemented for at least six months to see results.

