

Utica OD 11/14/2003

More on Vicks for nail fungus

Dear Dr. Gott: When I read of your twice-daily application of Vicks VapoRub for toenail fungus, I thought it was another myth. But, because the cost was so reasonable, I gave it a try.

I am now halfway through a jar of Vicks. Initially, after two weeks of treatment, I noted definite improvement. One nail that was thick and partially separated from the nail bed is growing out firm and clear. The effects of Vicks are astonishing and I can eagerly endorse the therapy based on my personal experience.

Is there more than one type of toenail fungus? My doctor says that pills are the only answer and that topical products are useless.

Dear Reader: I suppose that there are different types of fungus that can attack the nails, but this is not the important issue. The key element is to reduce the infected portions of nail as much as possible, by trimming, clipping or filing the yellow, thickened nail and removing as much of the fungal debris under the nail as you can. Then, as the nail grows out, continue to trim away the affected portion.

While the Vicks treatment takes months to be effective, it is cheap and easy — certainly safer than expensive prescription pills that can cause liver damage and other consequences.

When a reader first wrote me about this remedy, I — like you — thought it was another myth, but I tried it anyway, with astounding success. Doctors almost never experiment on themselves by using the medications they prescribe for patients. So here is an example of an old gaffer who did. It worked for me, and — judging by the positive mail I have received — it works for others as well. Remember the key element: clean away the nail. And be patient.

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Dr. Peter Gott's syndicated column appears daily. To write: Peter Gott, c/o United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016.

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