



Footnotes From Dr. Smith

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ordinary name • extraordinary care

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Laser Treatment Pending for Fungal Nail

Toenail fungus is a widespread problem, affecting almost 23 million people in the U.S. That's why noninvasive, drug-free laser treatments are being studied as treatment options.

The proposed laser treatment of fungal nail would shine laser light through the toenail. This would kill the fungus, leaving surrounding tissue unharmed.

"Laser treatment could provide a painless, noninvasive and drug-free process for fungal nail sufferers," says Dr. Smith. "It only takes about 10 minutes per toe and causes no side effects. So far, studies show multiple laser light exposures may be required."

However, Dr. Smith says too few studies have been completed to determine the effectiveness of laser treatment for fungal nail. FDA approval is still pending. Finally, the expected cost is \$500 to \$1000, and insurance plans do not cover laser treatment of skin and nails because it is considered cosmetic.

You can count on Dr. Smith to explore the latest in gentle, effective foot care.



What is a Neuroma?

If you experience tingling, numbness or a sharp, burning pain between toes or in the ball of your foot, you could have a neuroma.

"When bones press together, they can irritate a nerve, causing abnormal growth of nerve tissue called a neuroma," says Dr. Smith.

"Neuromas are associated with wearing tight shoes or high heels. Repetitive stress can also contribute to their formation."

Neuromas typically develop between the middle toes and cause tingling, numbness and/or sharp pain in the toes and ball of the foot. Dr. Smith says it may begin as a minor irritation, forming a painful lump if left untreated.

Reducing neuroma pain and swelling may involve:

- Orthotics and supportive, comfortable shoes
- Padding the ball of the foot
- Ice and massage
- Anti-inflammatory medications, treatments and injections

If these treatments have no effect, permanent numbing or removal may be necessary. Remember to see Dr. Smith for an early diagnosis of any foot pain.

