

ONYCHOLYSIS (SPLIT NAIL)

Onycholysis is a condition affecting the nails. It usually affects one or more fingernails. The first part of the word onycho refers to the nail. The second part of the word lysis refers to a split. Normally there is no split between your nail and the skin underneath it. In patients with onycholysis a split does develop and that is what causes the problem.

In the majority of cases of onycholysis the cause is an injury which lifts up the nail from the skin below it. The injury can be so slight you might not notice it. Many patients who develop onycholysis do a significant amount of work in water or have to wash frequently.

Many patients who have onycholysis have been told that they have a fungus infection. This is not true because the main problem is the split which develops. After a split develops, there can be bacteria and/or fungus over growth in between the nail and the skin. This is what causes the discoloration and symptoms.

There is no true cure for onycholysis until the nail grows back normally. In order to prevent any secondary infection, I will give you medication which can be applied to the area which will allow for quicker healing. It is okay to cover the nail with nail polish while it is in the process of improving.

Nails grow quite slowly and it may take many months for the nail to get back to normal. Hopefully you will notice a slow gradual improvement, but it is important to continue to use the treatment regularly. If you have any other questions regarding this condition, please don't hesitate to ask me.