



MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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FINGERNAIL/TOENAIL INFECTION (PARONYCHIA)

Diagnostic Findings

- A collection of pus at the junction of the cuticle and the fingernail.
- Redness and tenderness of this area.
- Occasionally, pus draining from this area.

Cause

A paronychia is usually infected with the Staphylococcus bacteria. The cause is usually a break in the skin resulting from pulling on or chewing on the cuticle. Thumb sucking may also contribute.

Expected Course

With proper treatment, this infection should clear up in 7 days. Your doctor may drain the infection in the office and/or prescribe an oral antibiotic.

Home Treatment

- *Antiseptic Soaks.* Soak the infected finger two -three times daily for 10 minutes in a warm soapy water or in hydrogen peroxide that has been diluted with an equal amount of water.
- Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic ointment.

Prevention

Discourage any picking or chewing of hangnails (loose pieces of cuticle). Instead, cut these off with nail clippers.

Call Our Office If:

- Fever or chills develop.
- A red streak spreads beyond the cuticle.
- The finger pad becomes swollen and tender.
- The infection is not improved by 48 hours on home treatment.
- The infection is not totally cleared up by 7 days.
- You have other concerns or questions.