

Your Guide to Nail DISORDERS

As you service clients, you'll notice some manifesting nail disorders. Keep this chart, which was reviewed by Dr. Johanna Youner, an attending podiatric physician and surgeon at New York Downtown Hospital, handy, so you know when to refer a client to a doctor. (When in doubt, don't service the client without a doctor's note.)

NAME	DESCRIPTION	YOUR ACTION	HOW IT LOOKS
Beau's lines (corrugations)	This condition is indicated by furrows or wavy horizontal lines across the nail. It results from an interruption or cessation of growth due to serious illness, shock, injury, or disease.	Mild cases:  Severe cases: 	
Brittle nail syndrome	It's characterized by extremely thin or peeling nails that don't grow far past the end of the nail bed. It is often inherited but can also be caused by advancing age or illness.		
Contact dermatitis	This is a skin reaction to contact with either irritants or allergens, such as monomers, adhesives, or primers. Symptoms include a localized rash, itching, redness, and dryness.		
Habit tic	This condition is often the result of nervous habits, including picking at, playing with, or stroking the nails. Thumbnails are often damaged by another nail.		



OK to Service



Refer to a Doctor

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Hangnail/agnail	Hangnails are small tears or splits in the nail plate or surrounding tissue. Usually the result of nail biting, they can also be caused by dry skin or injury. If untreated, they may become raw, painful, and subject to infection.	Small affected area:  Badly damaged or red area: 	
Hemorrhage (bruised nails/splinter hemorrhage)	Spots of blood or bruises caused by injury appear under the nail plate. New nail growth will depend on the extent of the damage.	Mild:  Severe or multiple bruises: 	
Ingrown nail	The leading edge of the nail grows into the skin, causing pain, irritation, and infection. The skin often breaks because of the pressure, creating an ideal environment for infection.		
Koilonychia (spoon nails)	A rippled, deformed nail plate that appears shaped like a spoon and is white or opaque is associated with this condition. It's often caused by age, chronic eczema, tumors, anemia, or chronic infections. The index, ring, and middle fingers are most often affected.		
Leukonychia (white spots)	Marked by white spots on the nail plate, it is often caused by minor trauma to the nail bed or matrix. Spots will grow out as the nail grows.		
Longitudinal grooves	Not to be confused with Beau's lines (which are horizontal grooves), longitudinal grooves are vertical grooves that are caused by trauma to a specific area of nail growth. This could be via a cyst or wart.		
Melanonychia (dark bands)	A localized area of increased melanin (pigment cells), this disorder is characterized by dark, usually vertical, bands under or within the nail plate. It is often harmless, but can also be a sign of cancer.		

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Nail tumor	This is a lesion that is located in the nail bed or matrix. Most nail tumors are benign, but may need to be removed by a doctor.		
Onychauxis	This is characterized by a thick nail. It can be caused by a variety of conditions including fungal nails, trauma, psoriasis, aging, and diabetes.		
Onychogryphosis (claw nail/ram's horn nail)	Caused by injury, aging, and psoriasis, claw nails have extreme thickening, twisting, or inward curving of the nail.		
Onycholysis (separation from the nail bed)	The nail separates from the nail bed. Trauma, fungal infection, or a thyroid disorder can be the cause, but most often the origin is unknown.		
Onychomycosis (fungal infection)	This disorder causes different kinds of deformities. The nail plate may become soft or parts of it may break away, or the nail may become thick, discolored, or irregular.		
Onychophagy (nail biting)	Chronic nail biting deforms the nail plate and damages tissue surrounding the nail. The result is often unattractive nails and the introduction of bacteria that may cause illness and minor but permanent nail deformities.		
Paronychia	Common infection among people whose hands are continually in water, it often results in inflammation, pus, and pain in and around the cuticle.		

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<p>Pincer nail/ trumpet nail</p>	<p>It's characterized by the over-curvedness of a nail that causes the nail to penetrate into the soft tissue. It is most commonly seen on toenails. The main cause is heredity, though it can also be caused by improper filing or other reasons.</p>	<p>Beginner pincer nail: </p> <p>Advanced or recurring pincer nail: </p>	
<p>Pseudomonas bacteria (greenies)</p>	<p>Commonly a secondary problem, this bacterial infection of the nail is most often the result of air pockets under the nail fold. Moisture gets in the air pocket, and the green pigment-producing organism thrives in the moist environment.</p>		
<p>Psoriasis</p>	<p>Psoriatic nails are scaly or pitted, and they can have debris collected under them. Severe cases can result in the nail plate completely crumbling. It is sometimes complicated by onycholysis and subungual hyperkeratosis (thickening of the nail bed).</p>		
<p>Pterygium</p>	<p>Caused by congenital defects, dry skin, or improper nail care, it's characterized by an overgrowth of the cuticle that sticks to the surface of the nail bed.</p>		
<p>Subungual hematoma</p>	<p>Caused by trauma, it's the accumulation of blood under a nail. The nail bed will appear red or purple because of the pooled blood.</p>		