



ARE YOUR TOES READY FOR SUMMER?

BY CONNIE HEIN

Has a toenail-gone-bad ruined any hopes you had for feeling comfortable baring your feet in the upcoming warm months? Don't despair – we found a new procedure that could be the perfect solution.

Chad Knutsen, DPM, podiatrist at A Step Ahead Foot and Ankle Clinic in Fort Collins and Loveland, says the KeryFlex Nail Restoration System is the perfect solution when nails have been damaged by fungus or other trauma.

The system, which is new in the United States and approved for use only by podiatrists, has been used in Europe for over eight years. The process uses a polymer resin, special activators and ultraviolet light to create a new healthy looking nail placed over the damaged nail, allowing the original nail to grow out naturally.

Dr. Knutsen says the first step in the procedure is to examine the damaged nails to determine whether a patient is a good candidate for the process. "The patient must have about 15 percent, or approximately

an eighth to a quarter of an inch, of the original nail still intact for the process to be effective. We do not recommend putting the nail on bare skin because it has nothing to adhere to and it will pop off after a few days."

The next step is to smooth the existing nail and take off any portion that is chipped or loose. A bonding agent is then brushed on the nail, and the liquid resin is painted, molded and shaped onto the nail, covering the damage and giving the patient a natural-looking nail that usually matches closely in color to the other nails. After the resin dries, an ultraviolet light is used to harden the resin. The nail can then be painted or left natural. Dr. Knutsen says using polish and polish remover doesn't harm the new nail.

While the resin nail is on, there is virtually no maintenance except to file it to keep it short and smooth as it grows out. "The nail is very durable, so after the first few days the patient can carry on with normal activities such as running and swimming without worry of the nail being damaged or coming off." He says if for some reason the nail does come off within the first few days, they replace the nail

with their remaining resin; but if the nail is damaged or pops off because it gets too long, was not filed smoothly and catches on something, there is a charge to redo the procedure.

"The great thing about this process is that the resin is quite flexible, giving the original nail the chance to grow out healthy," says Dr. Knutsen. He says the procedure does no damage to the nail itself or the nail bed. After three to four months the patient hopefully has a fully restored natural nail. "This sometimes takes more than one treatment, depending on the damage to the original nail."

The clinic is using the procedure with great success on patients who are being treated for nail fungus with laser treatments. Nail fungal treatments are typically done three times. They do the initial fungal treatment, then the second treatment 14 days later, and the last one in 60 days. He says patients often have the KeryFlex nail put on after the second treatment because they have 60 days to enjoy the fresh new nail. They remove the KeryFlex nail to do the last laser treatment and then reapply a new one. This does not interfere in any way with the fungal treatment.

BEFORE



AFTER




The KeryFlex nail restoration system is an easy solution to repairing damaged toenails.

Dr. Knutsen says they have been doing the procedure in their office for about a year and have had great results with hundreds of satisfied patients.

The cost of the procedure ranges from \$125 to \$175 and usually takes around 45 minutes for the complete process. The nail typically lasts three to four months, and then the patient can come back for another treatment if necessary to continue the process of restoring the original nail.

Unfortunately, "insurance does not typically cover the treatment because it is considered cosmetic," says Dr. Knutsen. He says patients have said it is a small price to pay for a healthy appearance.

To turn those toenails-gone-bad into toenails-made-healthy, call A Step Ahead Foot and Ankle Clinic Fort Collins office at (970) 493-4660 or the Loveland office at (970) 667-0769 or visit their website at www.asafoot.com. 

Connie Hein is a freelance writer living in Windsor and the author of the *Toliver in Time* series of children's books.

Spring has sprung

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Before

After



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