Fingernail Problems
Fingernails

- Fingernails are made from a protein called keratin
- New nail cells form at the base of the nail under the cuticle
- As the cells grow older, they harden and get pushed out towards the tips of the fingers
- Healthy fingernails are
  - Smooth (no pits or grooves)
  - Uniform in color
  - Have no spots or discoloration
What do YOUR fingernails reveal about your health?

• Here are examples of changes in fingernails that should be checked out by a doctor

• The Mayo Clinic website at [www.mayoclin.com](http://www.mayoclin.com) has a slide show with pictures illustrating these conditions

• Nail pitting: small depression in nails
  – Psoriasis
  – Connective tissue disorders

• Nail clubbing: tips of the fingers enlarge and nails curve around the fingertips
  – Low oxygen in blood (lung disease)
  – Inflammatory bowel disease
  – Cardiovascular disease
  – Liver disease
  – AIDS

• Spoon nails: soft nails that look scooped out
  – Iron deficiency anemia
  – Heart disease
  – Hypothyroidism
• Terry’s nails: tip of each nail has a dark band
  – Aging
  – Liver disease
  – Congestive heart failure
  – Diabetes
• Beau’s lines: indentations that run across the nails
  – Uncontrolled diabetes
  – Peripheral vascular disease
  – Illnesses associated with a high fever (scarlet fever, measles, mumps and pneumonia)
  – Zinc deficiency
• Nail separation: fingernail becomes loose and can separate from nail bed
  – Injury or infection
  – Reaction to drugs or consumer products
  – Thyroid disease
  – Psoriasis
• Yellow nail syndrome: nails thicken and new growth slows causing a yellowish appearance
  – Respiratory diseases (chronic bronchitis)
  – Swelling of the hands (lymphedema)
How to Have Healthier Nails

• If you have abnormal nails see your doctor to find out the underlying cause
  – Once that has been determined take steps to address health issues such as chronic bronchitis, diabetes, heart disease, etc.

• If you have dry, brittle nails
  – Absorbable silica
  – Omega fatty acids from sea buckthorn berry and seed

• If you have fungal infections
  – Plant oils applied topically
  – Strengthen the immune system with elderberry, vitamins and minerals
  – Garlic
Antibiotic Overuse
Got Antibiotics?

• Doctors prescribe enough antibiotics every year that we could give them to 4 out of 5 Americans.

• In 2010 in states with the highest antibiotic use (West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee) 1,200 prescriptions were written for every 1,000 people!

  – **Why?** Researchers guess that more people have infections in the South (because of warmer weather)
  – Also, rate of diabetes is higher in the South and people with diabetes tend to get more infections.
Antibiotic Resistance

• Antibiotics have been used so widely, and for so long, that bacteria have evolved to be resistant to their effects

• Some bacteria are resistant to just one drug, or one class of drugs

• Some are resistant to many drugs – called “multidrug resistance”

• Some superbugs are so resistant NO drugs work against them
  – In addition to bacteria, there are also resistant strains of fungi, viruses and parasites
Our Number 1 Antibiotic: Azithromycin

• Azithromycin is the most frequently prescribed antibiotic
• Commonly used for bronchitis
• HOWEVER bronchitis is caused by a VIRUS and antibiotics are useless!
• Using an antibiotic when it is not indicated is one of the reasons antibiotic resistance is becoming such a problem
Other conditions for which antibiotics are overused or not required

• 40-50% of all antibiotics are prescribed inappropriately

• Antibiotics are not needed for
  – Acute upper respiratory tract infections which are **viral** in nature
    • Common cold
    • Sinusitis
    • Ear infections (otitis media)
  – Bronchitis
  – Asthma
  – Viral pneumonia
What can help when Antibiotics won’t

• Many natural products have antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, or anti-parasitic activity
• Elderberry
  – Antiviral and anti-inflammatory – shown to shorten the duration of colds and the flu
• Andrographis
  – Antiviral and immune boosting properties – shown to reduce the symptoms and shorten the duration of respiratory infections (common cold)
• Garlic and Echinacea
  – Antibacterial and antiviral properties – great for kids with ear infections
• Plant oils
  – Antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal and antiparasitic
  – Oregano oil is excellent for all types of infections
  – Eucalyptis and Myrtle work very well for lung and sinus problems