

The Efficacy of Vinegar and Hydrogen Peroxide in Treating Toenail Fungus: A Case Study

Judy Stouffer, B.S., M.S., SFO and Michael Stouffer, B.S., SFO

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In 2004, Michael developed a severe fungal toenail infection in his right big toe after the toenail became damaged in a household accident. A trip to Michael's doctor confirmed that the nail and nailbed were severely infected with a fungus. After Michael discussed treatment options with his MD, we reviewed our options.

Both of us were reluctant to consider oral prescription antifungals, the standard treatment that was recommended, due to the high cost and relatively low cure rate for that protocol. We therefore turned to the web to research other options.

Although the web is rife with claims of cures from home remedies, we didn't find any convincing data to bear out these claims.

We therefore decided to carry out our own case study, using hydrogen peroxide and vinegar, to see if these two inexpensive, widely available and relatively safe substances could cure a toenail fungus infection. We consulted Michael's MD to make sure he had no concerns about our plan. He agreed that it had little or no possibility of harm and was in fact quite interested in seeing the results.

We decided to use 5% vinegar and 2% hydrogen peroxide soaks (about 5 minutes of soaking time) on alternate days for 3 weeks. Starting in April of 2004, Michael soaked the toe in vinegar for five minutes on one day, then soaked it in hydrogen peroxide the next day. 3% hydrogen peroxide was diluted to 2% by adding distilled water, so as to make the hydrogen peroxide solution slightly less caustic on his exposed skin. We never mixed hydrogen peroxide and vinegar together, as that forms peracetic acid, a caustic chemical with entirely different properties.

Each day, Michael used a press-and-release technique on the toenail to get the vinegar or hydrogen peroxide under the toenail to the infection site at the base of the nail.



Illustration One (left) shows Michael's toe as of June of 2004. After three weeks of treatment, new healthy nail growth has started along the entire base of the toenail.



Illustration Two (right) shows Michael's toe as of January 2005. Healthy nail continues to grow up from the base of the nail. No evidence of any new fungal growth is present, even though the three-week-long treatment with hydrogen peroxide and vinegar soaks stopped six months earlier, and no additional treatments have been used.



Illustration Three (left) shows Michael's toe in September of 2005. The entire toenail and nail bed are healthy and free of any signs of fungal infection.

The toenail remains free of fungal infection as of August 2008. We used this same protocol when Judy developed a toenail fungus infection in 2007, with equally good results.

If you are interested in trying this protocol, please consult your physician first. This article should not be construed as medical advice.