

Fungal Nail Infections - Onychomycosis

Fungal infections of the nails are common in clinical practice. Generally, this infection must be differentiated from dystrophic nails and a definitive diagnosis is needed before antifungal therapy is initiated.

A review of the literature gives several methods to diagnose suspected cases.

- KOH Preparation
- Culture
- Biopsy and (PAS) Staining
- Clacofluor White (CW)

Of the four (4) tests listed above, biopsy and PAS Staining is the most sensitive after CW. PAS is also superior to KOH and Culture in its negative predictive value and essentially equal to Culture in positive predictive value.

TEST	SENSITIVITY	SPECIFICITY	POSITIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE	NEGATIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE
KOH	80%	72%	88%	58%
CULTURE	59%	82%	90%	43%
PAS STAIN	92%	72%	89.7%	77%
CW	GOLD STD	GOLD STD	GOLD STD	GOLD STD

Clinicians may submit Nails for Biopsy and PAS Staining.

Order an 801 using the Blue and White Tissue Requisition or Web Order and indicate "Nail for PAS Staining" in remarks.

Special stains are generally out within 48 hours of receipt by the laboratory and may offer an excellent alternative to culture that may take 4-6 weeks to report.

CPT CODING 88304, LEVEL III AND 88312 SPECIAL STAIN (PAS)

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Reference: J Am Acad Dermatol 2003, Aug; 49(2): 193-7. Abstract quote.