

I've had Covid Finger – at least, I think so!

A few days ago, I was idly web-searching and I decided to search for 'Covid Finger' - I now think, that I had Covid in February/March of 2021. Some of the images, and information, are from these two webpages:

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/covid-fingers-and-toes-what-does-it-look-like_uk_5f33a738c5b64cc99fe02c60

<https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/coronavirus/covid-toes>

I had a weird hand affliction back in late winter/early spring. In fact it started with a sore left big toe (on top of the toe, between the joint and the fingernail: not at the end/side of the toe, where a chilblain would be, nor at the edge of the nail where fungal infections tend to be [in my experience]. Then it largely moved (a couple of other toes were slightly afflicted, at various times over the next few weeks) to my hands – and over perhaps 2 or 3 weeks, all of my fingers and thumbs were affected (some worse than others).

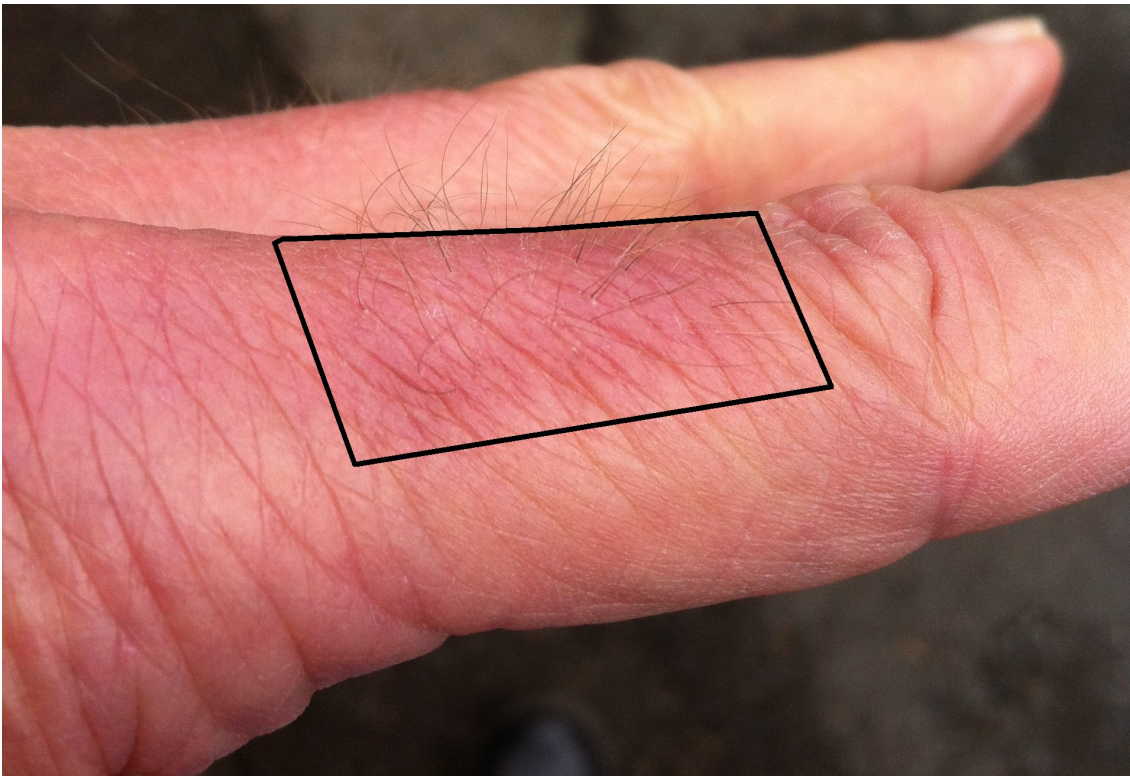
For my fingers, the stages were:

- 1) part of a finger would feel 'tender' for no obvious reason;
- 2) after a couple of days, a small (say 2mm in diameter) red spot, flat and not disappearing (from memory) if you pressed the skin, would appear where the skin was 'tender';
- 3) a couple of days later, a patch of skin would be reddened/purpled and raised centred on where the small red spot had been – it wasn't that things visibly spread out from the small spot, the entire red patch would appear at once. And the original red spot, would pretty-much have disappeared into the larger inflamed area.

It has been over 2 months since the skin has healed, and now the discolouration of the damaged patches is fading – but I have tried to take some photos on 24th and 25th June.

My hands, 24/25 June





Things are a bit 'messy' because these skin lesions appeared over the course of 2 or 3 weeks from memory, and also took up to 2 or 3 weeks to 'heal', and I discovered (I think!) that if I put Mycota cream on during stages 1 and 2, stage 3 probably would not develop. It is hard to see where the damage was now it is a few months into the healing process – but that area on the first finger of my left hand was the worst-affected and the last to heal, and the really 'weepy area' was inside the border added to the photo above

What do 'Covid fingers and toes' look like?

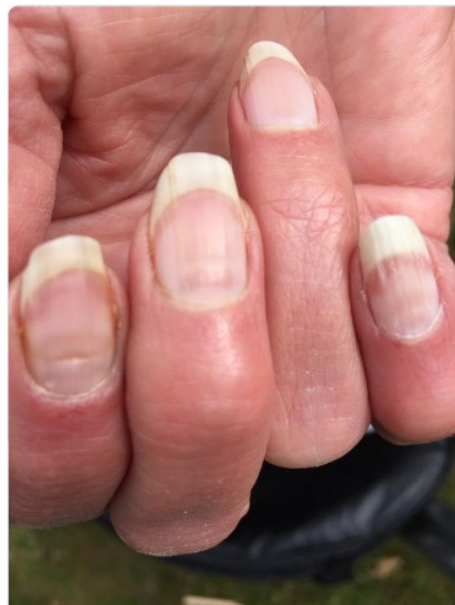
Covid fingers and toes are considered the rash most specific to Covid-19. It's more common in children and young people with the disease, and it also tends to present later on in someone's illness – but not always.

The red and purple bumps that appear on the fingers and toes may be sore, but not usually itchy. When the rash recovers, the top layers of the skin may peel.



Tim Spector
@timspector

Do your nails look odd? COVID nails are increasingly being recognised as the nails recover after infection and the growth recovers leaving a clear line. Can occur without skin rashes and appears harmless





COVID SYMPTOM STUDY
Covid toes



The unusual thing about the nails – and I did notice this at the time – is a ‘white crescent’ which appears, where the nail is usually ‘just flesh-coloured’. It is easier to see in real life, than on the photos – you can just about see it, on the Tim Spectre tweet and also in one of my own photos (look at the central one of my fingers – there is a white crescent, which has now almost grown out, that you can just about still see).

The online piece also has a picture of Covid Toe which is also correct for what I had.



Note the mark near the finger joint – a small dark ‘dot’, in this photo surrounded by a ‘ring’. That seems to have the type of ‘red dot’ which my lesions started with, but on the palm-side of the hand, and in that case surrounded by a small ring.

The image below, of toes, seems to show what looks like a version when the large patches I had [on my hands] did not develop.



I am intrigued by this – I am satisfied it is ‘diagnostic for Covid’ when you see all the stages (so the small red dot, followed by the wider patch of inflamed skin which appears all-at-once, and also those ‘white crescents’ in your nails). The online articles, seem to imply that these signs of Covid might appear ‘at the end of’ the infection – so, at the end of an asymptomatic infection for me. And, as my skin problems appeared sequentially over two or 3 weeks, presumably ‘Covid was still around in my skin/system’ for several weeks.

Why I think my skin lesions were ‘diagnostic of’ Covid

I have never had great circulation in my toes and fingers; I know what chilblains look like when I get them, and I have some experience of fungal toe-nail infections. What happened on my fingers, was new for me.

On its own, the effects on my toes would have left me somewhat puzzled, but it isn’t the effects on my toes that I believe ‘mean it was Covid’.

It is the lesions on my fingers which make me think ‘that must have been Covid!’, and in particular these observations (despite my dubious memory, I think this description is correct):

The area of my fingers which were the worst-affected, was between the knuckle and the finger joint closest to the knuckle: the next-worst affected part of my fingers was between the two finger joints; the least affected part of my fingers, was the end section with the nail.

The skin over a finger joint was sometimes affected, but (from perhaps unreliable memory for this point) that never happened first – I’ve a feeling a joint became involved, only after there were lesions to either side of it.

The skin over my knuckles, was not affected at all.

It is the combination of what happened on my fingers, and the way it happened, which makes me feel ‘that must have been Covid-related’.

And it seems – my ‘trying to not catch Covid’ measures clearly didn’t work. As I am only one person, I can’t tell if that was bad luck, or if my protective measures were inadequate (as in ‘I wasn’t ‘unlucky’ to have been infected). I hope I didn’t pass the bug on to anyone – not very likely, as I wasn’t coughing and I always wore gloves when shopping.

Lots and lots of people, ‘think they had Covid based on ‘flu-like’ symptoms’ - based on these Covid Finger & Toe symptoms, I feel 99+% confident that I did have Covid: and despite being male and pretty old, the only effect I noticed was a skin infection (which at the time, I suspected was some sort of auto-immune issue: not something I wanted to ponder too much, as that could have been distinctly nasty!).

It seems some dermatologists wanted Covid Finger to be listed to the diagnostic symptoms last autumn, but it wasn’t – and I think very few people are aware of it. Now I’ll be looking at other people’s hands!

I include a few other screengrabs from online pieces – it seems these skin-effects are hugely variable, like many aspects of Covid, so it would be tricky to use them [at least for members of the public] as ‘a sign of’ Covid. But – I honestly believe that my own experience, almost certainly was ‘Covid Finger’.

The rashes associated with COVID-19 fall into three categories:

- **Hive-type rash (urticaria):** Sudden appearance of raised bumps on the skin which come and go quite quickly over hours and are usually very itchy. It can involve any part of the body, and often starts with intense itching of the palms or soles, and can cause swelling of the lips and eyelids. These rashes can present quite early on in the infection, but can also last a long time afterwards.
- **‘Prickly heat’ or chickenpox-type rash (erythematous-papular or erythematous-vesicular rash):** Areas of small, itchy red bumps that can occur anywhere on the body, but particularly the elbows and knees as well as the back of the hands and feet. The rash can persist for days or weeks.
- **COVID fingers and toes (chilblains):** Reddish and purplish bumps on the fingers or toes, which may be sore but not usually itchy. This type of rash is most specific to COVID-19, is more common in younger people with the disease, and tends to present later on.

The swelling and discoloration can begin on one or several toes or fingers, according to Amy Paller, MD, FAAD, who is a board-certified pediatric dermatologist and Chair of Dermatology at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine. At first, you might see a bright red color that gradually turns to purple. COVID toes can also begin with a purplish color.

brownish purple spots (B).

Symptoms: Many people don't feel anything and only realize that they have COVID toes when they see the discoloration and swelling on their feet (or hands).

Along with the swelling and discoloration, COVID toes can also cause blisters, itch, or pain. Some people develop painful raised bumps or areas of rough skin.

Others may see a small amount of pus under their skin.

Sometimes, people who have COVID toes have other symptoms of COVID-19.

Treatment for COVID toes: To reduce pain or itching, apply a hydrocortisone cream.





Suspected COVID-19 rash



Exanthem associated with COVID-19



Exanthem associated with COVID-19



Suspected COVID-19 rash



Suspected COVID-19 rash



Suspected COVID-19 rash



Rash associated with COVID-19



Hand dermatitis in a patient with COVID-19 infection





Many diseases, such as measles and chickenpox, cause a distinctive rash that helps doctors diagnose a patient. COVID-19 is different. There is no single COVID-19 rash.

What you may see: You can have COVID-19 and never develop a rash. When a patient with COVID-19 does develop a rash, it can look like any of the following:

- Patchy rash
- Itchy bumps
- Blisters that look like chickenpox
- Round, pinpoint spots on the skin
- Large patch with several smaller ones
- A lace-like pattern on the skin
- Flat spots and raised bumps that join together



Hives-like rash: Dermatologists are seeing patients with COVID-19 who develop a rash that looks like hives.

Symptoms: Some rashes itch.

Treatment: Some rashes require medical treatment.

Keep in mind that you can have a rash that's due to a condition other than COVID-19. If you develop a rash, contact your doctor.

How long does a COVID-19 rash last?

More information is needed to know for sure. Right now, reports suggest that a rash typically lasts between 2 and 12 days, with most people having a rash for 8 days.



Rash on COVID-19 patient's thigh: This rash could also be mistaken for hives.