

Table 6-1

Overview of Nail Disorders

DISORDER	SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS	IMAGE
Discolored nail	Nails turn a variety of colors; may indicate surface staining, a systemic disorder, or poor blood circulation	 <small>Pradit.Phy/Shutterstock.com</small>
Eggshell nail	Noticeably thin white nail plate is more flexible than usual; usually caused by diet, heredity, internal disease, medication, or overfiling with an abrasive; use caution when manicuring these fragile nails and minimize or avoid filing	
Hangnail	Damaged skin around the nail plate (often on the eponychium) becomes split or torn; can be carefully trimmed, provided the living skin is not cut or torn in the process	 <small>FCG/Shutterstock.com</small>
Leukonychia	Whitish discolored spots on the nails, usually caused by minor injury to the nail matrix; often appear in the nails but do not indicate disease and disappear as the nail grows	 <small>Sarathy2010/Shutterstock.com</small>
Melanonychia	Significant nail darkening caused by increased pigment cells (melanocytes), visible as a black band extending from the base to the free edge, or as a dark color over the entire nail plate	 <small>Dematolog11/Shutterstock.com</small>
Nail pterygium	Irregular stretching of the eponychium or hyponychium around the nail plate; usually from serious injury or an allergic skin reaction; creams or conditioning oils may be helpful, but never attempt to treat or push back nail pterygium with any instrument	
Onychophagy	Bitten nails; frequent manicures and proper hand care can help overcome this habit	