

## A Hamster Suffers A Growth On Its Toe

### **Why is a hamster's toe sore and discolored?**

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**Q:** Two of my hamster's toes are red, and it appears that something is growing next to its nail. I think it's something other than another nail. It looks yellow and mauve near the nail, and it looks sore but it doesn't seem to be bothering him. Do you know what this is and how to cure my hamster of it?

**A:** This could be a number of things. First, you don't mention how old your hamster is or if he lives by himself. If he is an older hamster that lives by himself with no other animals in the house, my guess is that this is trauma with a secondary bacterial infection. This can happen when the hamster has a mishap in the exercise wheel and the wound subsequently becomes infected with bacteria. Also, in older hamsters we need to worry about both benign and malignant masses. All of these conditions can be diagnosed and possibly treated by your veterinarian.

In younger hamsters, or in colonies, I would consider skin infections to be more likely. These would include both parasitic, such as demodex, or fungal infections. Both of these conditions are easily diagnosed and treated by your veterinarian.