

ATHLETE'S FOOT (Tinea Pedis)

What causes Athlete's Foot?

Athlete's Foot (also called Tinea Pedis) is a skin infection caused by a type of mold called a fungus. This fungus is everywhere in the environment. The fungus that causes Athlete's Foot prefers moist, warm skin; this is why Athlete's Foot rash favors the folds between toes and is often worse in hot weather. Not all foot rashes are Athlete's Foot, only those caused by fungus growing in the skin.

Athlete's Foot fungus may stay in the skin indefinitely. Even if the rash seems to have been cured, microscopic examination may reveal the fungus to be present. Although medicines will clear the rash, the fungus may merely be "lying low" and may cause the same rash again.

What are the symptoms?

- itching
- cracking and peeling skin
- soreness
- occasionally blisters

Can Athlete's Foot spread?

Athlete's Foot rash rarely spreads to other parts of the body. Sometimes the same fungus that causes Athlete's Foot will cause a groin rash in men (Jock Itch).

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider can usually diagnose athlete's foot after examining your skin. Sometimes a skin scraping or culture may be used to aid the diagnosis.

Can you give Athlete's Foot to other people?

It's possible. However, special precautions at home are pointless because there is no way your family can avoid exposure to the fungus outside of the home. In our society, everyone is exposed to the fungus causing Athlete's Foot; why only some people get it is not known.

How do you treat Athlete's Foot?

Athlete's Foot is usually well controlled by application of antifungal liquids, creams, or ointments. For control of your Athlete's Foot, apply the medication as instructed on the package or by your provide.

Severe cases of Athlete's Foot may require an antifungal medication taken by mouth. Sometimes, infection with bacteria complicates Athlete's Foot and antibiotics are needed to kill the germs.

How can I prevent Athlete's Foot?

Athlete's Foot may come back, especially in hot weather or when you wear poorly ventilated shoes. To help prevent Athlete's Foot, do the following:

- Dry feet well after bathing
- Change socks frequently
- Wear well-ventilated shoes, especially in the summer
- Apply antifungal powder to your feet in the morning (helps prevent reactivation of Athlete's Foot)
- Wear flip flops or sandals when you use a locker room

Test Results and Advice Nurse

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

Appointments

Appointments can be made in person or by phone. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

To schedule or cancel appointments, call: 863-0774

For more information about health care issues, visit the UHS Web site at www.sa.psu.edu/uhs
This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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