

ATHLETE'S FOOT

(Tinea Pedis; Ringworm of the Feet)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A common, contagious fungus infection of the skin on the feet, especially the soles and skin between toes (often the 4th and 5th toes). It usually affects adolescents and adults (rare in young children).

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Moist, soft, gray-white or red scales on feet, especially between toes.
- Dead skin between toes.
- Itching in inflamed areas.
- Damp, musty foot odor.
- Small blisters on the feet (sometimes).

CAUSES

Infection by a *Trichophyton* fungus.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Infrequent washing of the feet.
- Infrequent changes of shoes or socks.
- Use of locker rooms and public showers.
- Hot, humid weather.
- People who are immunosuppressed due to illness or medications.
- Persistent moisture around the feet.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Bathe feet daily. Dry thoroughly between the toes and apply drying or dusting powder.
- Wear rubber thongs or wooden sandals in public showers.
- Go barefoot when possible.
- Change socks daily and wear socks made of cotton, wool or other natural, absorbent fibers. Avoid synthetics.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable in 3 weeks with treatment, but recurrence is common.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Secondary bacterial infection in the affected area.
- Id reaction on hands and face (a rare skin rash).



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- After soaking or bathing, carefully remove scales and material between the toes daily.
- Keep affected areas cool and dry. Go barefoot or wear sandals during treatment.

MEDICATIONS

- Use non-prescription antifungal powders, creams or ointments after each bath.
- For severe cases, you may be prescribed oral or more potent topical antifungal medications.

ACTIVITY

No restrictions. Temporarily avoid activities that cause feet to sweat.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You have severe symptoms of athlete's foot that persist, despite self-treatment.
- You develop fever or the infection seems to be spreading.