

Athlete's foot (tinea pedis)

This is a very common form of fungal infection, often acquired in swimming pools and gym changing rooms and showers. Footwear and hosiery can also create an environment for the fungal infection to thrive, especially during the summer. People with athlete's foot may have evidence of infection elsewhere, such as the hands or groin.

Possible symptoms

- Wet, moist areas between the toes, especially between the smaller toes
- Severe itching with red, raw looking skin
- White or red rash on the bottom of your feet, or between the toes
- Dry flaky skin that may peel or crack
- Small "spot like" blisters
- A musty smell of the feet.

Prevention

- Wash feet daily and dry well using a clean towel, using surgical spirit in between the toes every other day if unable to dry thoroughly with a towel.
- Wear clean socks daily, made from natural fibres such as cotton.
- Wear well-fitting sandals that allow the air to circulate whenever possible.
- Wear shoes with leather or gortex uppers as these enable the foot to breathe.
- Do not wear the same shoes all day every day as the feet sweat, making the shoes damp inside.
- Do not use talcum powder between your toes.

Treatment

- Wash your feet using cool water rather than hot water.
- Various creams are available from your local pharmacy and GP. Not all creams will effectively resolve the fungal infection. Talk to the pharmacist for further information.
- Whenever you treat your feet make sure that you wash your hands well afterwards or wear disposable gloves.
- Females of childbearing age, or who are pregnant or breast feeding, should not use medication for athlete's foot without advice from the pharmacist
- Ensure that the instruction from any treatment used is the correct period of time as the infection may still be present without any symptoms.
- Remember that the fungus causing athlete's foot can live in your shoes. These should be sprinkled with athlete's foot powder or spray whenever you think your feet may get hot and sweaty.
- It is also important to wash all your socks and bed sheets at boiling temperature to eliminate all fungi to prevent re-infection.



Please note

Due to the fact that athlete's foot can cause a break in skin, anyone with another underlying condition such as peripheral vascular disease or diabetes, is more likely to have a secondary bacterial infection and is more risk of further complications.



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