

ATHLETE'S FOOT



Athlete's foot (also called tinea pedis) is a rash caused by fungi growing and multiplying on your skin. The fungi causing the infection thrive in warm, dark and moist places like feet.

The rash usually affects the skin between your toes, but often spreads to the bottom and sides of your feet. The affected skin may look white, soggy and cracked; or dry, red, scaly and flaky. It may be itchy, sore or covered in small blisters.

You are more likely to get athlete's foot if you have diabetes, or if you have a weakened immune system from cancer therapy, steroid therapy or other medicines or conditions.

How can I treat athlete's foot?

- Athlete's foot probably won't get better on its own, but antifungal creams such as **clotrimazole 1% cream** or **miconazole 2% cream** should stop the fungi growing. If you are taking a medicine to thin your blood, such as warfarin, it is best to use clotrimazole cream.
- Spread the antifungal cream on to the rash and the area around it.
- Use the clotrimazole cream 2 to 3 times a day for at least 4 weeks to stop the rash coming back.
- Use the miconazole cream 2 times a day (morning and night) for at least 10 days **after** the rash has gone.
- If your skin is very red and itchy, your pharmacist may also give you **hydrocortisone 1% cream** to use 1 or 2 times a day. Spread a thin layer over the rash. You must use the hydrocortisone cream **with** the clotrimazole or miconazole cream or your skin may not heal. Don't use the hydrocortisone cream for longer than 7 days.

What else can help?

- Keep your feet clean and dry.
- Dry in between your toes after washing your feet.
- Wear shoes and socks that keep your feet cool and dry, such as cotton socks.
- Use talcum powder to stop your feet getting sweaty.
- Don't use moisturiser between your toes, because this can help fungi to multiply.
- Let the air get to your feet by taking off your shoes when at home.
- Wear a different pair of shoes every 2 or 3 days.
- Don't scratch your rash, because this can spread the infection.
- Don't walk around barefoot in places like gym changing rooms or public showers.

Do I need to see my doctor?

See your doctor if:

- your rash keeps coming back
- your rash is painful or you've treated it for 1 week and it hasn't got better. This might mean that you also have an infection caused by bacteria
- you have a weakened immune system from cancer therapy, steroid therapy or other medicines or conditions
- you have poorly controlled diabetes and have not seen your doctor in the last 3 months.

Can I give athlete's foot to other people?

Yes, athlete's foot can easily spread to other people by touching infected skin, or by coming into contact with objects or surfaces that have infected flakes of skin on them. If you have athlete's foot, don't share towels, socks or shoes with other people and don't walk around barefoot in public places.

Where can I find further information?

Patient UK: www.patient.info

NHS Direct Wales: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

NHS Direct Wales Tel: 0845 4647 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Calls from landlines and mobiles cost 2p per minute, in addition to telephone providers access charge.