

What is Athlete's Foot

Athlete's foot is a fungal infection of the skin that causes scaling, flaking, and itching of affected areas. The condition typically affects the feet, it can spread to other areas of the body, including the heels, palms, between the fingers hands and the groin.

Athlete's foot can be treated by a number of pharmaceutical and other treatments.

Athlete's foot is the most common type of tinea fungal infections. The fungus thrives in warm, moist areas.

Your risk for getting athlete's foot increases if you:

- Wear closed shoes, especially if they are plastic-lined
- Keep your feet wet for prolonged periods of time
- Sweat a lot
- Develop a minor skin or nail injury

Athlete's foot is contagious and can be passed through direct contact or contact with items such as shoes, stockings, and shower or pool surfaces.



How do we solve these problems?

Symptoms

The most common symptom is cracked, flaking, peeling skin between the toes or side of the foot. Other symptoms can include:

- Peeling, cracking, and scaling of the feet.
- Redness, blisters, or softening and breaking down (maceration) of the skin.
- Itching, burning, or both.



If the fungus spreads to your nails, they can become discoloured, thick, and even crumble. Athlete's foot may occur at the same time as other fungal skin infections such as ringworm or jock itch.



Can I get athlete's foot if I'm not an athlete?

Anyone can get athlete's foot.

Some people are more prone to fungal infections because of their age, heredity or health condition.

Older people are more susceptible because, as their skin ages, it becomes thinner and drier and is less able to guard against fungal infections.

People with diseases that lower their resistance to infection are also at increased risk and should take preventive measures to keep athlete's foot in check.

Treatment

In most cases, your nurse can diagnose athlete's foot by looking at your foot. He or she will also ask about your symptoms and any previous fungal infections you have had.

Over-the-counter antifungal powders or creams can help control the infection. . Keep using the medicine for 1 - 2 weeks after the infection has cleared to prevent the infection from returning.



In addition:

- Keep your feet clean and dry, especially between your toes.
- Wash your feet thoroughly with soap and water and dry the area very carefully and completely. Try to do this at least twice a day.
- Wear clean, cotton socks and change your socks and shoes as often as necessary to keep your feet dry.
- Athlete's foot almost always responds well to self-care, although it may come back.



Prevention Athlete's Foot

- Always wash and dry feet carefully, especially between the toes.
- Use foot powder to help keep feet dry
- Use antifungal medication to treat infected areas as prescribed by your nurse when symptoms first appear.
- Be sure to use the medication for the entire recommended period of time.
- If the infection does not respond to treatment, see the nurse.



For General Enquiries

0861 327 87857

(0861 FastPulse)

www.fastpulse.co.za

e-mail: info@fastpulse.co.za



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