

Athletes Foot

Body Part

Skin and nails of your feet

Condition:

Athlete's foot — also called tinea pedis — is a contagious fungal infection that affects the skin on the feet, but can also affect the toenails. The fungal infection is called athlete's foot because it's commonly seen in athletes.

Summary

Athlete's foot occurs when the tinea fungus grows on the feet. You can contract the fungus through direct contact with an infected person, or by touching surfaces contaminated with the fungus. The fungus thrives in warm, moist environments. It's commonly found in showers, on change room floors and around swimming pools.






Anyone can contract athlete's foot, but certain behaviors increase your risk. Risk factors include:

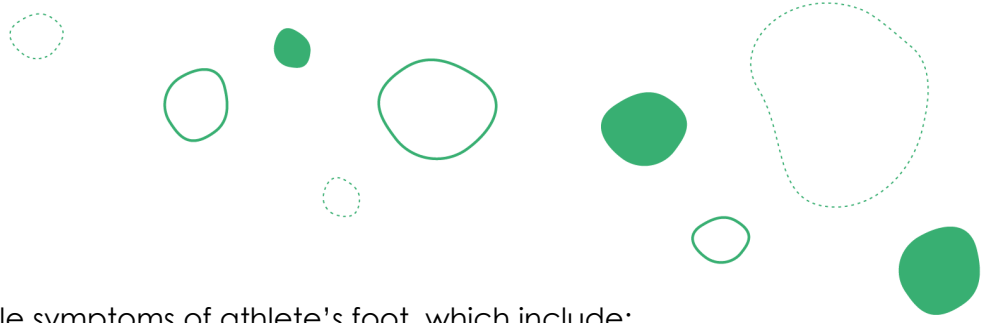
- Visiting public places barefoot especially showers, change rooms and swimming pools
- Sharing socks, shoes, or towels with an infected person
- Poor ventilating footwear
- Synthetic socks
- Keeping your feet wet for long periods of time
- Sweaty feet



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Symptoms:

There are many possible symptoms of athlete's foot, which include:

- itching, stinging, and burning between your toes or on soles of your feet
- blisters on your feet that itch
- cracking and peeling skin on your feet, most commonly between your toes and on your soles
- dry skin on your soles or sides of your feet
- raw skin on your feet
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- discolored, thick and crumbly toenails

Athlete's foot is not detrimental for most of the population but if you're an at risk person with a chronic illness such as Diabetes or Peripheral Vascular disease (PVD) you may be at risk at contracting a bacterial infection through the cracks in the skin, which can have dire consequences.

Prevention:

As per usual - prevention is better than cure. So here are some preventative tips:






- Wash your feet with soap and water every day and dry them thoroughly, especially between the toes.
- Wash socks, bedding and towels in water that's 60°C or higher.
- Wear cotton or woolen socks that breath and wick the moisture away from your feet.
- Avoid synthetic socks
- Put antifungal powder on your feet every day.
- Don't share socks, shoes, or towels with others.
- Wear sandals in public showers, around public swimming pools, and in other public places.
- Change your socks when your feet get sweaty.
- Air out your feet when you are at home by going barefoot.
- Wear shoes made of breathable materials.
- Alternate between two pairs of shoes, wearing each pair every other day, to give your shoes time to dry out between uses.

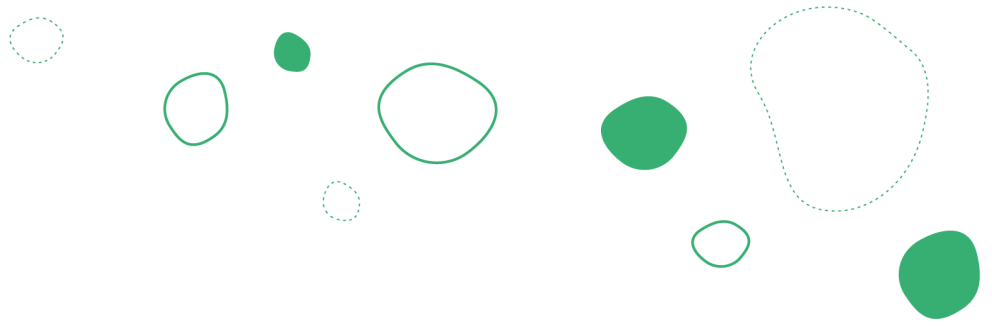
(Note - These tips should also be followed once contracting the infection)



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Treatment:

- Topical antifungal
 - E.g. creams or ointments (follow pack for application instructions)
- For more persistent infections oral antifungals can be used but should be taken under guidance of your GP.

Prognosis:

Depending on the severity and duration of the infection the skin could start clearing up within 1-2 weeks. It is however important to continue treatment for another 2 weeks after the last signs of infection were visible to properly eradicate it. For toenail infections you may have to wait anywhere from 3-12 months depending on severity.



Further information:





For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link: <https://www.dermnetnz.org/topics/tinea-pedis/>



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