

ATHLETE'S FOOT:

Athlete's foot is a fungus infection that usually starts between the toes. However, it can also involve other areas of the foot and even the toenails. The fungus "germ" is present almost everywhere, but some individuals are more susceptible to fungal infections than others which is controlled by genetics.

Fungus is a common mold that thrives in dark, warm, moist places. Fungus infections commonly attack the areas of the skin in this environment, which shoes provide. Fungal problems can be a result of environment (socks, shoes, heat and humidity) or weakened immunity (diseases such as diabetes). Chronic (long standing) fungal infections are seen most commonly in adults, while acute (short lived) fungal infections are seen more often in children. Initially the symptoms include moist, malodorous, cracking, peeling, red and itching skin.

Topical applications of over-the-counter or prescription creams will usually clear the infection on the skin. In some cases, oral anti-fungal medications are needed to clear the infection. Once a patient has been infected, the disease may recur intermittently. The following are important foot care instructions for those who have been affected by athlete's foot:

1. Wash the feet carefully with soap and water.
2. Dry feet carefully, especially between toes.
3. Use a medicated foot powder.
4. Try using spray deodorant/antiperspirant once or twice a day on your feet to decrease sweating.
5. Wear only synthetic socks, not cotton.
6. Wear a different pair of shoes everyday.
7. Change socks 2 times a day.

Adhering to these home care "tips" will help to prevent another episode of athlete's foot.

The best topical antifungal we have found for athletes foot is Tolnaftate cream which is available in our retail store, on line or at the front desk. Apply to affected area 2 times a day for 1-2 weeks. If you have dry skin with this we recommend Heel Relief Cream as well. These two creams can work together to decrease dryness (Heel Relief Cream) and kill fungus (Tolnaftate cream).