

Patient Fact Sheet

Athlete's Foot



What is it?

Athlete's foot is a highly infectious fungal infection which thrives in moist warm areas of skin such as that between the toes. One in seven adults will catch it at some point.

How do I know if I've got it?

You will notice itchy, irritating patches of skin between the toes. The skin may be damp and soggy, but it may also crack, flake, bleed and be quite painful.

Who gets it and how is it caught?

It's called athlete's foot because sporty people who spend a lot of time in training shoes often suffer with it, that's because the shoes combined with exercise create a warm, damp environment on which the fungus grows. It's not just people who get it. It's very easy to catch and to pass on to other people. The fungus can be transferred wherever you go barefoot, the bathroom, communal showers and changing rooms or if you share towels or shoes used by someone who has the infection.

How do I treat it?

Be careful to wash and dry your feet thoroughly. There are various creams, ointments, sprays and powders available. Ask your chiropodist, doctor or chemist for advice.

What happens if it's not treated?

As well as getting worse, the fungus will spread to the nails and can easily be moved to the groin area, armpits and other areas by you.