

# Athlete's Foot

*Athlete's Foot*

**YOUR  
PODIATRIC  
PHYSICIAN  
Talks About**

**Athlete's  
Foot**



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## Consult Your Podiatrist

If, after proper foot hygiene and self care, there is no improvement, consult your podiatrist. The podiatrist will determine if a fungus is the cause of the problem. If it is, a specific treatment plan, including the prescription of antifungal medication, applied topically or taken by mouth, will usually be suggested. Such a treatment appears to provide better resolution of the problem when the patient observes the course of treatment prescribed by the podiatrist; if it's shortened, failure of the treatment is common.

If the infection is caused by bacteria, an antibiotic may be prescribed.



This pamphlet is one of a series produced by APMA that discusses several foot health conditions and concerns, including bunions, neuromas, warts, foot orthotics, aging, children's feet, forefoot and rearfoot surgery, women's foot concerns, walking, heel pain, nail problems, footwear, and others. They are not meant to be substitutes for professional advice from your podiatric physician. The pamphlets are available from members of APMA. Or call:

**1-800-FOOTCARE**

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In cooperation with **OrthoNeutrogena**

## Athlete's Foot

**A**thlete's foot is a skin infection caused by a fungus, usually occurring between the toes or on the soles of the feet.

The fungus most commonly attacks the feet because shoes create a warm, dark, and humid environment, which encourages fungus growth.

The warmth and dampness of areas around swimming pools, showers, and locker rooms, are also breeding grounds for fungi. Because the infection is common among athletes who used these facilities frequently, the term "athlete's foot" became popular.

Not all foot rashes are athlete's foot. In addition, other conditions, such as disturbances of the sweat mechanism, reaction to dyes or adhesives in shoes, eczema, and psoriasis, also may mimic athlete's foot.

## Symptoms

**T**he signs of athlete's foot can include dry skin, itching, scaling, inflammation, and blisters. Blisters often lead to cracking of the skin. When blisters break, small raw areas of tissue are exposed, causing pain and swelling. Itching and burning may increase as the infection spreads.

Athlete's foot may spread to the soles of the feet and to the toenails. It

can be spread to other parts of the body, notably the groin and underarms, by those who scratch the infection and then touch themselves elsewhere.

The fungus causing athlete's foot may persist for long periods, causing many recurrences of the infection. For this reason, it's important to have the condition treated by a podiatric physician.

## Prevention

**G**ood foot hygiene is the best defense against infection. Daily washing of the feet with soap and water; drying carefully, especially between the toes; and changing shoes and hose regularly to decrease moisture, help prevent the fungus from infecting the feet. Also helpful is daily use of a quality foot powder in the shoes.

## Tips

- ◆ Avoid walking barefoot; use shower shoes.
- ◆ Reduce perspiration by using foot powder in shoes.
- ◆ Wear shoes of leather or canvas, or perhaps nylon mesh, which allow good air circulation; avoid rubber or plastic shoes;

change to a different pair of shoes each day if you perspire heavily.

- ◆ Wear socks that keep your feet dry, and change them frequently if you perspire heavily.

## Treatment

**T**here are many effective medications that can be used to treat and help control fungal infections.

