

Information about Athletes Foot



What is Athletes Foot?

Athletes foot is a very common fungal infection which affects your feet, usually between your toes. At any one time, around 17% of adults in the UK have athletes foot.

While such fungal infection is not usually dangerous, it can cause discomfort, may be resistant to treatment and may spread to other parts of the body or to other people.

Athletes foot can be uncomfortable and should be treated as soon as you notice the first signs of infection. The first signs of infection are itchiness and scaling, which can spread to the soles and heels and borders of the foot.

Left untreated, some cases develop into a chronic infection.

How does someone get Athletes Foot?

1. Picked up in communal changing rooms or showers in your own bathroom from towels and bath mats.
2. Sharing towels or footwear with someone else already infected.

How is Athletes Foot infectious?

With athletes foot the skin becomes inflamed and itchy with flaking and cracking occurring. These infected flakes of skin are shed onto the floor by walking which means someone else could easily be infected if they were to step onto these flakes barefoot.

How do I manage this condition?

1. Ask your pharmacist for advice on the best treatment for you. Creams are generally considered more appropriate for treating moist areas, while ointments may be useful when these are dry areas.
2. Do not share towels or footwear with anyone else and wear footwear at all times even in communal changing rooms.
3. The role of personal hygiene in fungal feet infections is unclear, however it is probably wise for patients to wash their feet daily and to dry them thoroughly.

The usual treatment time for most anti-fungal creams is three to four weeks. If topical treatment shows no improvement or fungal infection is widespread see pharmacist or GP.