

# Athlete's Foot (Tinea Pedis)

(A common fungal infection of the feet)

## What Is Athlete's Foot?

**Athlete's foot**, also called **tinea pedis**, is a common **fungal skin infection** that affects the feet. It often develops in warm, moist areas such as between the toes and can spread to the soles, toenails, or other body areas.

## What Does Athlete's Foot Look Like?

Common signs include:

- Peeling or cracking between the toes
- Itching, burning, or stinging
- Dry scaling on the soles
- Redness or irritation
- Small blisters in some cases
- Foot odor or discomfort



## How Does It Spread?

Athlete's foot can spread through:

- Locker rooms and showers
- Pool areas
- Shared towels or footwear
- Sweaty socks and tight shoes
- Scratching, then touching other body areas

## How Is Athlete's Foot Treated?

Treatment depends on severity:

- Antifungal creams, gels, or sprays
- Prescription-strength topical medications
- Oral antifungal medication for severe or stubborn cases
- Treating toenail fungus if present
- Moisture control and prevention steps

## Pre-Op Instructions

*(Before evaluation or treatment)*

- Keep feet clean and dry.
- Avoid applying heavy ointments right before your visit.
- Bring or list any OTC antifungal products you have used.
- Tell us if you have diabetes, poor circulation, immune suppression, or toenail changes.
- Bring footwear information if sweating or recurrence is a problem.

## Post-Op Instructions

*(After starting treatment)*

- Use antifungal medication exactly as directed.
- Continue treatment for the full recommended course, even if symptoms improve early.
- Dry carefully between toes after bathing.
- Change socks daily or more often if sweaty.
- Use breathable shoes and rotate footwear.
- Avoid walking barefoot in public locker rooms or showers.

Call the office if redness spreads, pain worsens, cracks become infected, or symptoms do not improve.

## Athlete's Foot FAQ

### Is athlete's foot contagious?

Yes. It can spread through contact with infected skin, surfaces, towels, socks, or shoes.

### Can athlete's foot spread to toenails?

Yes. It can spread to toenails and cause nail fungus.

### Can it spread to the groin or body?

Yes. Fungus can spread by towels, hands, or clothing, causing jock itch or ringworm.

## **Do I need prescription treatment?**

Mild cases may improve with OTC antifungals, but persistent, recurrent, or severe cases may need prescription treatment.

## **Why does it keep coming back?**

Common reasons include sweaty feet, untreated shoes, untreated toenail fungus, or stopping treatment too early.

## **Can steroid creams make it worse?**

Yes. Steroid creams can reduce redness temporarily but may allow fungus to spread.

## **When should I see a dermatologist?**

Schedule a visit if symptoms persist, recur, involve toenails, or you have diabetes or immune suppression.