

# Tinea Versicolor

(A common superficial fungal condition causing lighter or darker skin patches)

## What Is Tinea Versicolor?

**Tinea versicolor** is a very common superficial fungal condition caused by an overgrowth of yeast that normally lives on the skin. Despite the name, it is not the same as ringworm.

The condition causes:

- Lighter patches
- Darker patches
- Fine scaling
- Uneven skin tone

It most commonly affects:

- Chest
- Back
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Upper arms



## What Causes Tinea Versicolor?

The yeast normally lives harmlessly on the skin, but certain conditions can trigger overgrowth, including:

- Hot or humid weather
- Sweating
- Oily skin
- Exercise
- Hormonal changes
- Immune system changes



Tinea versicolor is common in teenagers and young adults.

## What Does Tinea Versicolor Look Like?

Common signs include:

- Lighter or darker patches than surrounding skin
- Fine dry scale
- Mild itching in some patients
- Areas that become more noticeable after sun exposure because affected skin does not tan normally

The color changes vary depending on skin tone.

## Is Tinea Versicolor Contagious?

No. It is generally not considered contagious because the yeast normally exists on most people's skin.

## How Is Tinea Versicolor Diagnosed?

A dermatologist can often diagnose tinea versicolor during a skin exam. Sometimes additional testing may include:

- Skin scraping
- Microscopic examination
- Wood's lamp examination

This helps distinguish it from vitiligo, eczema, post-inflammatory pigment changes, or other fungal infections.

## How Is Tinea Versicolor Treated?

Treatment may include:

- Antifungal creams or lotions
- Antifungal shampoos used on the skin
- Oral antifungal medication for widespread or recurrent cases

Even after the fungus is treated, skin color may take weeks or months to return to normal.

## Pre-Op Instructions

*(Before evaluation or treatment)*

- Avoid heavy lotions or oils before your appointment.
- Tell us if you previously tried antifungal products.
- Inform us if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or taking other medications.
- Arrive with clean skin if possible.

# Post-Op Instructions

*(After starting treatment)*

- Use medications exactly as directed.
- Continue treatment for the full recommended course.
- Keep skin cool and dry when possible.
- Shower after heavy sweating or exercise.
- Use maintenance therapy if recommended for recurrent cases.

Call the office if:

- The rash spreads rapidly
- Skin becomes painful or inflamed
- You develop medication side effects
- Pigment changes continue worsening

## Tinea Versicolor FAQ

### **Is tinea versicolor the same as vitiligo?**

No. Vitiligo is an autoimmune pigment disorder, while tinea versicolor is caused by yeast overgrowth.

### **Why are the patches more noticeable after tanning?**

Affected areas do not tan normally, making the contrast more visible after sun exposure.

### **Will my skin color return to normal immediately?**

No. The fungus may clear before the pigment returns to normal. Repigmentation can take weeks to months.

### **Is tinea versicolor contagious?**

Generally no. The yeast normally lives on human skin.

### **Can tinea versicolor come back?**

Yes. Recurrence is common, especially in warm humid climates or with sweating.

### **Does poor hygiene cause tinea versicolor?**

No. It is related to yeast overgrowth, not poor hygiene.

## **Can over-the-counter antifungal shampoos help?**

Some mild cases improve with antifungal shampoos or washes, but persistent or recurrent cases may require prescription treatment.