Athleteâ€™s Foot: What It is & How to Avoid It by

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The human body contains fungi and bacteria; both good and bad. These organisms are also present on the feet where troublesome fungal infections can occur due the warm, dark habitat.

Whilst generally harmless, some conditions can cause fungi to multiply leading to a fungal infection such as athleteâ€™s foot.

What are Fungi?

Fungi are microorganisms that survive by feeding off broken-down tissue, including human tissue.

Athleteâ€™s foot is caused by a particular group of fungi called dermatophytes, as feet provide the ideal living and breeding conditions for them to live and grow: warm, dark and damp.

Dermatophytes can cause infections in areas such as the nails, outer layers of the skin, scalp and hair. The main groups of fungi that cause fungal infections such as athleteâ€™s foot are:

â€¢ Dermatophytes (tinea)

â€¢ Yeasts (candida)

â€¢ Moulds

Is it only Athletes Who Get It?

A common misperception is that only athletes can contract athleteâ€™s foot.

However, this is not the case; athleteâ€™s foot is so-called due to conditions and places in which it most typically develops. The fungus that causes athleteâ€™s foot can be found living in areas such as swimming pools, public showers and locker rooms. Now you can see where the link between athleteâ€™s and the infection materialises.

These areas are not only warm and moist, the ideal breeding ground for such organisms â€“ but people are often barefoot while in them, making it easy for the fungus to transfer onto their feet.

So how can I try to prevent it?

First of all, avoid those with it. Athleteâ€™s Foot is a contagious fungal infection; it can be spread through direct and indirect contact.

For example:

Direct Contact

Skin-to-skin contact; someone may develop the infection if they touch your affected skin and do not wash their hands afterwards.

Indirect Contact

The fungi could be passed via contaminated towels, bed sheets and clothing.

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