

A quick guide to:

ATHLETE'S FOOT



Athlete's foot is caused by a fungus and is so called because it is common in athletes whose feet spend a lot of time in sweaty shoes. It affects the moist areas of the foot, especially between the toes and often under the inner arch. It is extremely contagious.

APPEARANCE

Athlete's foot appears as soft, white flaky patches occurring between the toes. Small blisters may also be present.

CAUSES

The infection is caused by a fungus which is most commonly spread in swimming baths, on floors of changing rooms and on damp towels and socks.

SYMPTOMS

Aside from the physical appearance of flaking, cracked skin and blisters, the skin surrounding the toes may experience an itchy, burning or stinging sensation. If the condition is particularly severe, the cracking skin can sometimes expose the raw tissue underneath which can be extremely painful and increases the risk of bacterial infections and complications.

The infection can spread to the toenails, causing them to become dry and crumbly. It can also be spread by hands to other parts of the body such as the groin.

PREVENTION

The best way to prevent athlete's foot is to practise good foot hygiene. Wash your feet daily, paying particular attention to the spaces between your toes. If your feet are particularly sweaty, use talcum powder to reduce moisture build up.

Make sure your feet are dry before putting on shoes or socks. Avoid tight fitting footwear and change your socks and shoes regularly.

As infection can be picked up from communal changing rooms or pools, try to wear flip flops in these areas.

If you have recently had the condition, make sure you wash your towels and bedding frequently to avoid reinfection.

TREATMENT

Most people can treat athlete's foot at home – it is usually quite a mild infection and responds well to treatment with topical antifungal medication. Oral medication, prescribed by a GP, may be necessary if the infection is more severe.

For more information please visit:

www.carnationfootcare.co.uk

or speak to your podiatrist.