

TINEA VERSICOLOR



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

An infection caused by a yeast type of skin fungus that changes the color of skin that it affects. The skin of the chest, back, shoulders, upper arms, trunk, or groin (rarely, the face) is most often affected. The infection is more common in teens and young adults.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Small, scaly spots (or patches) on the skin. They may appear white to pink or tan to dark. They show up differently on light skin as compared to darker skin.
- Affected skin may itch (more likely if the person gets hot).
- Spots begin small and spread. They may join together to form larger patches.
- In hot climates, a person may have the spots all year around. In other climates, they may fade during the cooler months.

CAUSES

A fungus called *Pityrosporum orbiculare*. It is present on normal skin, but it can't be seen and it normally causes no problems. Why it grows more active and causes symptoms for some people is unknown.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Exposure to heat and high humidity.
- Excess sweating.
- Skin that is more oily.
- Weak immune system due to illness or drugs.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No specific preventive measures. Once you have had the infection, re-treatment can help stop a recurrence.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

There is no permanent cure. Treatment can clear up the infection. Following treatment, the patches will remain for months after the infection has been cured.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Recurrence is common. The episodes of recurrence decline with age.
- The cosmetic appearance of the skin may cause some emotional distress, especially in young teens.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider can usually diagnose the disorder by an exam of the affected skin. Medical tests may include a microscopic exam of scales scraped from the skin to confirm the diagnosis.
- Numerous topical products are effective in clearing tinea versicolor.
- Your health care provider will usually recommend a method to help prevent a recurrence. Several options are available. One method is to repeat treatment every week for 3 to 4 weeks and then once a month for 3 to 4 months.

MEDICATIONS

- Nonprescription, antifungal, topical products such as shampoos, creams, or lotions may be recommended. These are applied to the affected areas. Use product as directed on the label.
- In some cases, drugs taken by mouth may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY

No limits. Try to avoid activities that cause excess sweating. If heavy sweating occurs, shower as soon as possible.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of tinea versicolor.
- Infection doesn't improve despite treatment.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page