

Tinea Cruris (Jock Itch)

Jock itch is a fungal infection that appears primarily in the male groin. This fungus thrives in dark, warm, moist areas. Jock itch is a common fungal infection that causes discomfort among male athletes and those who perspire a lot.

It usually starts as a red patch and as it spreads, the lesions become larger and more numerous. The center of these patches may partially clear and the borders will become slightly elevated. Symptoms may extend into the thighs and buttocks. In most males, the scrotum is not affected. Jock itch can cause a great deal of itching and irritation. A typical source of the infection is a patient's own athlete's foot infection (tinea pedis), which is more common in men and in those who are obese. Sweating, warm weather and tight clothing all increase the risk of developing a fungal infection in the groin, as a warm, moist environment promotes fungal growth.

The signs and symptoms of jock itch include:

- x Itching and redness in your groin, including your genitals, inner thighs and buttocks
- x Possible itching in your anal area
- x Burning sensation in affected areas
- x Flaking, peeling or cracking skin in your groin

Jock itch can make wearing underwear or tight clothing uncomfortable. Walking or exercising may aggravate the rash and worsen your signs and symptoms.

Jock itch is best treated with topical creams or ointments since the fungus only affects the top layer of skin. Many of the antifungal medications require a prescription, but there are three that can be bought over-the-counter (OTC). The OTC antifungals are _____ (Miconazole) and _____ (Micatin). Creams used to treat jock itch should be applied twice a day for at least two weeks. Application can be stopped after the rash has been gone for one week. Creams should be applied to the rash and also at least two finger widths beyond the rash. Many people with jock itch also have athlete's foot and these same creams can be applied to the feet. However, treatment of athlete's foot can take up to four weeks.

To prevent jock itch from occurring or re-occurring, several measures may be taken.

- x Wear loose fitting clothing made of cotton or synthetic materials designed to wick moisture away from the surface.
- x Avoid sharing clothing and towels or washcloths.
- x Allow the groin to dry completely after showering before covering with clothes.
- x Antifungal powders or sprays may be used once a day to prevent infection.

Jock itch can spread from person to person by shared use of contaminated towels or clothing or through direct contact during sexual intercourse with someone who has the infection.

Sources and/or additional resources:

Web MD: <http://men.webmd.com/tc/jockitch-topic-overview>

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/jockitch/DS00490>

Family Doctor.org: <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseasesandconditions/tinea-infections.html>

If you are a registered Millersville University student and you have questions or you need to make an appointment,