

MANAGING YOUR HEALTH

SUPPLEMENT TO

Australian
Reader's
Digest

The Managing Your Health series has been developed to help you gain a better understanding of life and health issues affecting many Australians, and the prevention and treatment options available.



FOOT CARE: PREVENTING ATHLETE'S FOOT/TINEA/TOENAIL FUNGUS

Thousands of Australians are plagued by the dry skin, itching and scaling, and even painful skin breaks caused by fungal infections. Most people with these ailments are aware that treatments are available; however preventing the spread of infection and the cycle of re-infection can be easily managed.

In this Managing Your Health we present straightforward solutions for maintaining healthy feet and preventing skin conditions from recurring.

KEEPING ON GOOD TERMS WITH YOUR FEET

Feet can be likened to car tyres.

The tyres on the average family car are often given little thought by the driver; lack of care and maintenance can then lead to them giving trouble or performing poorly.

Sometimes, unfortunately, our feet suffer similar neglect. Like tyres, they are our main contact with *terra firma*, and they need to be looked after accordingly.

Good care and ongoing preventive maintenance is the key to good foot health, never more so than when fungal infections have become a recurring problem.



WHAT CAUSES FUNGAL INFECTIONS?

The most common fungal skin problem with feet is athlete's foot, or *tinea pedis*. It is a very common skin condition, and many people will develop a *tinea* infection at some time during their lives (yeast infections are even more common, particularly in women). It is more frequent among teenage and adult males, but may occur in women and in children under the age of 12. There is no direct connection between athlete's foot and sports. Anyone – regardless of whether or not they are “athletic” – can pick it up almost anywhere. Nevertheless sportsmen and women, or anyone who uses communal bathing facilities or whose feet become hot and sweaty, such as travellers, need to take particular care with the condition. So too do diabetics, who often have impaired circulation which can delay healing.

With athlete's foot tiny “germs” grow and multiply on the skin. They grow best in a dark, moist, and warm environment. A foot inside a shoe, particularly between the toes, is the perfect place for the fungus to develop. It may also be present around the groin area (in a form called *tinea cruris*) where it causes “jock itch”.

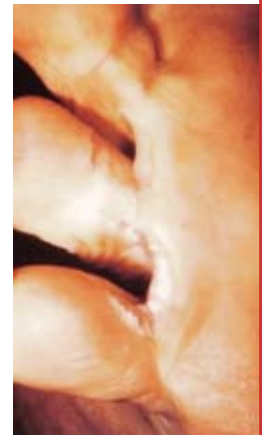
Fungi breeds around warm, damp areas such as swimming pools, showers, communal bathroom and laundry facilities and locker rooms, where the microscopic organisms come into easy contact with bare feet.

The condition can develop further with sweaty feet, tight shoes or socks, and not drying one's feet properly after swimming, bathing or exercising. It is highly contagious, and may spread to the soles of the feet and to the toenails, at which point the infection becomes very difficult to treat. The organisms may persist for long periods; consequently, the infection may be spread by contaminated bed sheets or clothing to other parts of the body.

THE TELL-TALE SYMPTOMS – HOW TO RECOGNISE ATHLETE'S FOOT

Athlete's foot may not always have the same appearance. In some people, the skin between the toes (especially the last two toes) peels, cracks and scales. There may be redness, scaling, and even dryness on the soles and along the sides of the feet. Athlete's foot may also produce itching and burning of the feet. A few individuals may develop a single small patch of wet, intensely itchy blisters that refuse to dry out.

With athlete's foot tiny “germs” grow and multiply on the skin. They grow best in a dark, moist, and warm environment.



WHAT DOES THE DOCTOR SAY?

Skin changes on the feet can be caused by medical conditions other than athlete's foot. Disturbances of the sweat mechanism, reaction to dyes or adhesives in shoes, contact dermatitis, eczema, or psoriasis can all mimic athlete's foot, so ask your doctor or dermatologist. He or she may take a scraping of the scaly area from the skin of your feet. The skin scales are then examined under a microscope to look for the tiny fungi or placed in a test tube to look for growth of the fungus.

Once it is diagnosed, treatment can begin immediately. (Untreated, athlete's foot can result in blisters and cracks that may lead to secondary bacterial infections, or to a worsening of existing toenail infections).

IT'S A DRY ARGUMENT

As mentioned previously, fungal spores thrive in a damp environment. You can help prevent athlete's foot by following some simple rules:

- + Wash your feet daily.
- + Dry your feet thoroughly with a fresh towel, especially between your toes, after bathing.
- + Wear socks made of natural fibre such as cotton or wool. This will keep your feet dry and allow the skin to 'breathe'. Change them frequently if you perspire heavily.
- + Reduce perspiration by using talcum powder.
- + Air your shoes after each use, and don't wear the same pair every day.
- + Avoid walking barefoot in showers, dressing and locker rooms; use shower shoes or 'flip-flops'/thongs. Whenever you can, opt for sandals or other well-ventilated shoes that allow your feet to breathe.



Essential wear: Bare feet are a no-no in public showers and locker rooms

A SECRET SOURCE OF FUNGI

People suffering from fungal infections such as athlete's foot, ringworm and thrush, may deposit large quantities of bacteria, fungal spores or viruses in shared laundry and personal clothing items.

Towels, bed linen, socks and underwear pose the greatest risk.

Cough, cold and flu sufferers can inadvertently spread their infection the same way. Cold and flu viruses can survive outside the human body for up to 48 hours.



Fungus and bacterial spores that may be present in your wash

Normal washing of laundry and personal clothing items, especially at cold temperatures, will not completely remove the bacteria, spores or viruses – they can still remain in the 'clean' laundry wash. In fact in a recent study* it was estimated that normal detergent in cold water eliminates only approximately 5% of germs in the wash.

This often leads to a cycle of re-infection for yourself and cross infection of other family members or sporting colleagues, with bacteria, fungal spores and viruses being passed on as people make contact with the 'infected' fabrics.

* Bayer data on file

GOOD TREATMENT – AND THE BEST TREATMENT

You may be familiar with athlete's foot treatments that are generally very effective and widely available through pharmacies, including anti-fungal creams and powders or perhaps prescribed anti-fungal pills. As for most medications, with these options you have to complete the course. If treatment is not continued for the full period, failure is common, and the condition may recur or persist.

In mild cases of the infection it is important to keep the feet dry by dusting foot powder in shoes and socks. The feet should be bathed frequently and all areas around the toes dried thoroughly.

The truth is that most athlete's foot conditions needn't keep recurring.

The best way to treat athlete's foot is to prevent it.

LAUNDRY MEDICINE

The simple addition of some 'medicine' in the laundry could be the solution to pain-free feet, and to fewer problems with general infections and family cold and flu complications this winter. The use of a sanitising rinse can help eliminate the fungal spores and bacteria, leaving laundry hygienically clean.

Canesten Hygiene Rinse for Laundry has been shown to eliminate 99.9% of germs in the wash.

It helps to break the cycle of re- and cross-infection by:

- + Helping to eliminate fungal spores that can lead to fungal infections such as athlete's foot, jock itch, ringworm and thrush
- + Helping to eliminate bacteria associated with secondary infections after coughs, colds and flu

Dermatological tests have demonstrated that Canesten Hygiene Rinse does not cause any irritation to the skin or have sensitising effects, even for people with sensitive skin. Added to the last rinse cycle, it is as gentle on clothes as a normal washing agent, can be used with fabric softener, and is front-loader friendly. It can even be used to soak items such as sports shoes and nappies.

If you or anyone in your family is suffering from fungal conditions such as athlete's foot, ask your pharmacist for advice on which Canesten anti-fungal product can best treat your condition.



Please tear along the perforation and FREE Post

READER SURVEY

Receive a
FREE SAMPLE



We are interested in your opinion on using hygienic rinses to help prevent the spread of harmful bacteria and viruses in the wash. **For your FREE Canesten Hygiene Rinse sample** please complete this survey, and **mail it before August 31 2007.**

Q.1 In the last 12 months, how frequently have you used an anti-fungal/anti-bacterial laundry rinse to kill bacteria, viruses, or fungal spores in clothing, bedding, and towels? (Circle one)

Every wash ① Only when needed ② Never used ③

Q.2 What is the main reason you use, or would consider using an anti-fungal/anti-bacterial laundry rinse? (Circle one response)

- It kills bacteria associated with colds, flu, and other illnesses in the wash ①
- It kills fungal spores associated with athlete's foot/tinea in the wash ②
- It kills fungal spores associated with vaginal thrush in the wash ③

Q.3 Which statement best describes how you feel about the following two anti-fungal/antibacterial laundry rinses? (Circle one response for each brand)

	Canesten Hygiene Rinse	Dettol Laundry Rinse
It's the only product I would use	①	①
It's one of my preferred products along with others	②	②
I use it occasionally	③	③
I've heard of it but know little about it	④	④
I don't use it, but would consider doing so	⑤	⑤
I would never use it	⑥	⑥
I have never heard of it	⑦	⑦



Q.4 Please circle your gender and age group:

Male ① Female ②
18-24 ① 25-34 ② 35-44 ③ 45-54 ④ 55-64 ⑤ 65+ ⑥

Q.5 Please circle the state or territory where you usually reside:

ACT ① NSW ② VIC ③ QLD ④ SA ⑤ WA ⑥ TAS ⑦ NT ⑧

Would you like a Canesten Hygiene Rinse sample sent to you? Please tick here

NAME: Mr / Mrs / Ms (circle one) _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

PHONE () _____

Mail (no postage required) before August 31 2007 to:

Canesten Survey, Reply Paid, PO Box 888, Eastern Suburbs MC NSW 2004



Prevention

Treatment



Canesten® Hygiene Rinses give you a fighting chance of preventing tinea and other fungal skin conditions before they even start.

Canesten® creams provide immediate soothing relief for the common symptoms, while working hard deep within the layers of the skin to fight the fungal infection and clear it.

Canesten®

Be prepared, with Canesten®.



Bayer

Bayer HealthCare, Consumer Care
Bayer Australia Ltd, ABN 22 000 138 714
875 Pacific Highway, Pymble NSW 2073
Customer service: 1800 008 757
www.canesten.com.au

® Registered trademark of Bayer
Always read the label. Use only as directed.
See your doctor if symptoms persist.