

Athlete's foot

Tinea pedis is probably the most **widespread** type of **fungal infection**. Although the world is full of **yeasts**, **moulds** and fungi only a small amount of these causes skin problems.

The fungus that causes athlete's foot is a so-called dermatophyte, which literally means "skin fungus". Any type of environment that is not **breathable**, such as **synthetic footwear**, socks and stockings, is a **breeding ground** for foot fungus. The symptoms include itching, burning and **stinging**, **itchy blisters**, cracking, peeling skin especially between the toes, and excessive dryness. Athlete's foot is also **highly contagious**.

Male pharmacy customer: Hallo.
PTA: Hallo. Was kann ich für Sie tun?

Do you have any foot lotion that you can recommend?

You mean for dry skin?

Yes. My feet have been really itchy for days now and it's driving me crazy!

Do you have any other symptoms?

Such as?

Such as dry flaky skin, especially between your toes and on the soles of the feet. Or is the skin even a little cracked in places?

Now that you say it, yes, I noticed this morning that the skin between my little toe and the next toe looked a bit reddened, a bit raw. Why?

It sounds to me like athlete's foot.

Athlete's foot! Oh man, oh man!

Now don't worry too much, it sounds as if it's in an **early stage**.

And that's good, right?

Yes, the early stages of athlete's foot can be treated quite well with OTC medication.

Okay, so what do you recommend?

This cream here is very effective if used properly and regularly.

Okay, so how do I use it?

It's a good idea **to apply** it once a day to the **affected area** after the shower in the morning. It's essential

that your feet are completely dry before you use the cream.

I'll do that. Is there anything else I need to do?

It's always a good idea to change your shoes every day so that they have a chance to dry out properly.

Why?

You see, the fungus that causes athlete's foot really **thrives** in warm **moist** environments, such as saunas, public swimming pools, shower rooms, places like that. The drier it is the less likely the fungus will survive. That's basically why it's called athlete's foot because it was generally found on the feet of people involved in sport. Men are more at risk because of this.

Are there any other causes?

Synthetic **fabrics** don't "breathe" so they provide the ideal conditions for the fungus. Natural **fibres** such as wool and cotton are ideal, or any material that allows moisture to escape. Oh, and it's not a good idea to share either **towels** or footwear. In any case, what ever fabric comes in contact with your feet, be it towels or socks, should be washed at 60 °C.

I must have picked it up at the fitness centre. I always have flip flops with me for the shower, but a few weeks ago I forgot them and had to walk barefoot around the showers. Typical!

Don't worry! You're certainly not alone! Not only sporty people can get athlete's foot, people with weakened immune systems are also **susceptible**.

Thank you for your help. Bye. ■

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Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

athlete's foot	Fußpilz
widespread	verbreitet
fungal infection	Pilzinfektion, Pilzbefall
yeasts	Hefepilze
moulds	Schimmelpilze
breathable	atmungsaktiv
synthetic footwear	Schuhe aus sythetischem Material
breeding ground	Brutstätte, Nährboden
stinging	stechend
itchy blisters	juckende Bläschen
highly contagious	hoch ansteckend
flaky	schuppig
reddened	gerötet
early stage	Anfangsphase, Frühstadium
to apply	auftragen
affected area	betroffener Bereich
thrives	gedeiht
moist	feucht
fabrics	Stoffe, Textilien
fibres	Fasern
towels	Handtücher, Badetücher
picked it up	(ugs.) angesteckt
susceptible	anfällig