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Intertrigo

What is intertrigo?

Intertrigo is a skin condition that commonly occurs in warm moist areas of the skin such as under the breasts, arms, groin and other body skin folds. The warmth and moisture promotes bacterial and yeast growth. This in combination with skin chafing can result in skin breakdown with redness and itching, stinging or a burning tenderness. Overweight people, people with excessive perspiration, and diabetics are at higher risk of developing intertrigo.

How is it treated?

Initial treatment is at keeping the affected area dry and treating bacterial and yeast infections.

Things that you can do to dry the skin include the following:

- 1) In the privacy of your bedroom expose the affected area and dry with an electrical fan, or a hair blow dryer set on the cool (not warm or hot) setting several times a day.
- 2) Cut felt strips and place them between the affected skin folds. Change these strips several times a day. Launder and dry the strips in between uses.
- 3) Wear underclothing made of wicking fabric. This fabric wicks perspiration off the skin to the outside of the garment promoting dryness. Wicking fabric goes by different names including polypropylene and CoolMax® that are available at some department stores, EMS (www.ems.com), Dicks Sporting Goods (www.dickssportinggoods.com), and other internet based retailers (www.sierratradingpost.com), (www.roadrunnersports.com). Women with intertrigo under their breasts can benefit from wearing a tee-shirt made of wicking fabric under their bra, to help keep the area dry and to minimize chafing.
- 4) Apply a strong topical antiperspirant to the affected areas at bedtime (e.g., Certain Dri - available without a prescription, and higher strength Drysol - requires a prescription.) Beware that if the skin is red and tender or has recently been shaved, the antiperspirant may sting. Dry the affected area well before applying the antiperspirant.
- 5) You can apply absorbing powders (Zeasorb), but **do not use corn starch powder** as this actually promotes growth of bacteria and yeast.

Other treatments for intertrigo include:

- 6) Treatment with non-prescription anti-yeast creams (e.g., clotrimazole, miconazole) and powders (e.g., Zeasorb AF).
- 7) Hydrocortisone 1% cream, available without a prescription, is often helpful in treating itching or mild tenderness.
- 8) Spectazole and Vytone cream are prescription medications that may be prescribed if the above treatments fail.
- 9) Other topical antibiotics (e.g., mupirocin, erythromycin) or antibiotic pills (e.g., cephalexin, erythromycin, dicloxacillin, or ciprofloxacin), or antifungal pills (e.g., fluconazole) are sometimes necessary.
- 10) Daily bathing with an antibacterial soap (e.g., Dial, Lever 200, PanOxyl) may also be of benefit.
- 11) Weight reduction should be a long-term goal as this will help prevent recurrences.

If the intertrigo does not resolve within several weeks of the above treatment, you should be reevaluated to rule out other skin conditions that can mimic or promote intertrigo (e.g., psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis, erythrasma, pemphigus). A skin biopsy is sometimes done to help diagnose a particular skin disorders.

Learn more about intertrigo at this web site: <http://www.emedicine.com/DERM/topic198.htm>

