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Tinea Versicolor & Perlèche

What is tinea versicolor?

Tinea versicolor is a common fungal skin condition that results in uneven skin color and fine skin flakes. It most commonly affects the upper arms, chest and back, and may sometimes appear on the neck and face. Some people with this infection will experience mild itching. It is more common in humid environments (summer months, and in the tropics). Some people are more prone to this infection, and genetic factors may play a role.

How is tinea versicolor diagnosed?

Tinea versicolor is usually recognized based on its location and appearance. However, in some cases flakes of skin are scraped off and examined under a microscope.

How is it treated?

Tinea versicolor can be treated with topical medications (e.g., antifungal or selenium sulfide creams, lotions, suspensions and shampoos). Topical treatment involves rubbing the medicated substance onto the skin to either kill the fungus or to remove the infected flakes. Alternatively antifungal pills can be taken to kill the fungus (e.g., ketoconazole (Nizoral) pills taken with a carbonated cola beverage, followed by exercise to induce a heavy perspiration 2 hours later).

How long does it take to go away after treatment?

After any form of treatment, the fine flakes should quickly clear up, no new spots should form and old spots should not enlarge. However, the uneven color of the skin may remain for several months after the fungus has been eliminated.

Will it ever come back?

Tinea versicolor often will reappear months to years later. To prevent this, medications can be applied to the skin once or twice a month (selenium sulfide (Selsun) or ketoconazole (Nizoral) lotion or shampoo).

Perlèche

What is Perlèche?

Perlèche, also known as angular cheilitis, is a mild rash at the corners of the mouth, usually caused by moisture that often becomes infected by yeast, and or bacteria. Patients with diabetes, dentures, or who drool may be at increased risk for developing this condition. Rarely it may be caused by nutritional deficiencies.

How is it treated?

For most patients, applying an over the counter anti-yeast cream like miconazole or clotrimazole twice daily for a week or more is sufficient to clear the condition. For some patients the condition will return and will need periodic treatment. Other treatments are sometimes necessary, including applying non-prescription zinc oxide ointment to the areas at bedtime.

