

Jock Itch

What is jock itch?

Jock itch is a pink, scaly, itchy rash on the inner thighs and groin. Other names for this rash are ringworm of the crotch or tinea cruris.

How does it occur?

Jock itch is caused by a fungus, often the same one that causes athlete's foot. Sometimes it is transferred by a towel used first to dry the feet and then the groin area. It is much more common in men than women.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms are:

- itching of the groin or crotch, anal area, or inner thigh
- slightly raised patch of dry or scaly rash in the groin area or on the inner thigh, often red or brownish red, with sharp borders
- redness of the skin.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and examine you.

How is it treated?

Your healthcare provider may recommend putting a nonprescription antifungal powder or spray on the affected area of your skin. Examples of such medicines are miconazole (Micatin), tolnaftate (Tinactin), and clotrimazole (Lotrimin).

For severe or chronic infection, you may need prescription medicine from your healthcare provider. You may need to take an oral antifungal medicine. Your provider may also prescribe medicine to put on your skin.

Sometimes the rash started by the fungus gets infected with bacteria. This is more likely to happen if you scratch the rash. If you have a bacterial infection, your healthcare provider may prescribe antibiotics.

How long does it last?

With treatment, the symptoms will get better in 2 or 3 days. The rash should go away in 3 to 4 weeks. If the rash does not get better in a week, or it is not completely gone in a month, call your healthcare provider.

How can I take care of myself?

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions for using the medicine.
Keep your skin clean and dry.
Avoid chafing or rubbing the skin. Wear loosely fitting clothing.
Try not to scratch the rash. This could slow its healing.

How can I help prevent jock itch?

Keep your groin area dry.
If you tend to have athlete's foot, avoid drying the rest of your body with towels you have used to dry your feet.
Wear loosely fitting clothes made of natural fibers, such as cotton. Avoid wearing tight-fitting and synthetic clothing that causes skin to perspire and doesn't allow moisture to evaporate.
Avoid wearing rough-textured clothing that can irritate your skin. Wear boxer shorts and change them at least daily. Athletes having one or more practices a day may need to change their underwear after each practice.
If you have a job or do an activity that leaves you hot and sweaty, change clothes as soon as you can.
Bathe or shower right after a workout and apply talc or other powder to the groin area after you dry yourself.
Wash your workout clothes after each use. Storing them in a locker or gym bag between uses creates the ideal environment for fungus to grow.

Published by McKesson Corporation.

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