

Tinea Versicolor

Definition

- Skin infection of teens and adults caused by a fungus
- Tinea versicolor means "ringworm of many colors"

Health Information

Symptoms

- Numerous spots and patches appear on the neck, upper back, and shoulders.
- The spots are covered by a fine scale.
- The spots vary in size.
- In summer, the spots are light and don't tan like the normal skin.
- In winter as normal skin tone fades, the spots look darker than normal skin. The spots often look pink or brown.
- Itching is uncommon. It's mainly a cosmetic problem.

Cause

- A fungus called *Pityrosporum ovale*

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Tinea versicolor is mainly a cosmetic problem.
- It is harmless and can't spread to others.
- It can be cleared up but it often comes back.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Selsun Shampoo:

- Selsun is a nonprescription medicated shampoo for dandruff. It also helps this condition. Also called Selsun Blue shampoo.
- Selsun works because it contains selenium sulfide 1%.
- Apply this shampoo to the affected skin areas. Apply it 2 or 3 inches around the spots. Rub it in and let it dry. Be careful to keep it away from the eyes and genitals. Reason: It's irritating to these tissues. After 30 minutes, rinse it off with a shower.
- Do this once a day for 7 days.

3. Prevention of Recurrent Tinea Versicolor:

- Tinea versicolor tends to recur.
- Prevent this by applying Selsun shampoo on the areas that were affected before.
- Do this once a month for 3 months.
- Leave it on for 8-12 hours (overnight). Shower in the morning.
- If it comes back again, use Selsun every summer once a month. Reason: The fungus thrives in warm weather.

4. **What to Expect:**

- With treatment, in 2 weeks the scaling should be gone. The rash should stop spreading.
- Normal skin color, however, will not return for 6 to 12 months.
- The problem tends to come and go for many years.

5. **Return to School:**

- Your child doesn't have to miss any school for Tinea versicolor.
- It cannot be spread to others.
- This fungus is found in the hair follicles in many people. Only a few develop the overgrowth of the fungus and a rash.

Call Your Doctor If

- Rash is not improved after 2 weeks on treatment
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

Author: Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

Copyright 2000-2022 Schmitt Pediatric Guidelines LLC

Disclaimer: This health information is for educational purposes only. You the reader assume full responsibility for how you choose to use it. The information contained in this handout should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. Listing of any resources does not imply an endorsement.