

Jock Itch (Tinea Cruris)

Jock itch is infection of the groin area with certain types of fungi called dermatophytes. The infection causes a rash in the groin, with itching that is sometimes severe. The infection usually clears up after treatment with antifungal medications and by avoiding moisture and irritation in the groin area.

What is jock itch?

Jock itch is a common infection of the groin (crotch) area caused by infection with certain types of fungi, called dermatophytes, the same fungi that cause ringworm and athlete's foot. Jock itch is also called "tinea cruris."

Jock itch most often occurs when the groin area is moist and irritated—for example, in teenaged boys wearing a tight-fitting athletic supporter ("jock strap"). However, this infection can also occur in females.

What does it look like?

- It usually starts as a small, scaly, red patch in the groin area, especially in areas around skin creases.
- Over a few days, the rash spreads over the inner thighs, although usually not the scrotum (the sac containing the testicles). Distinct areas of scaly rash may occur.
- The rash can be very itchy, especially at first. It may spread to other areas of the body.

What increases your child's risk of jock itch?

Jock itch occurs more often when the groin area gets moist and irritated, as on hot, sweaty days. Active people who wear

tight-fitting clothes and underwear are at increased risk. Jock itch is also more common in people who are overweight or obese.

How is jock itch diagnosed?

- The doctor may recognize jock itch from the appearance of the rash. Other conditions, such as yeast infections or irritation from clothing or products used in the area (contact dermatitis), may look like jock itch.
- To be sure of the diagnosis, the doctor may collect a sample by scraping the rash. He or she can then look at the sample under the microscope to see if fungus is present or may send it for culture. If culture is performed, it may take a week or longer to get the results.

How is jock itch treated?

- Keep the groin area clean and as dry as possible. Wear loose-fitting cotton underwear.
- Use topical (placed on the skin) antifungal medications. Over-the-counter products like Tinactin may be effective, or your doctor may recommend a prescription medication. The rash usually clears up after a few weeks of treatment.

When should I call your office?

Call our office if the rash doesn't clear up or if it returns after treatment.