

Ask Dr. Mikell

By Dr. Oswald Mikell

Intertrigo and Warm Weather Skin Care

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Do you ever wonder what effects our Lowcountry's warm, humid weather has on our skin? Intertrigo is a common skin concern, and it's notorious for flare-ups in hot, humid weather. Many people experience Intertrigo and have no idea what this annual mystery is.

A: What is Intertrigo?

Intertrigo is an inflammation that tends to occur in the warm, moist areas of the body where two skin surfaces rub or press against each other. This rash typically occurs in the skin folds, such as the armpits, under the breasts, and the inner thighs. It is very common, especially among overweight people or those with diabetes.

A: What are the symptoms?

The skin may develop raw spots, little red bumps and pustules may be present. Typically this area of the skin will appear as a sheet of redness. It may also itch and ooze if the infection persists.

Q: Is Intertrigo contagious?

A: No. You cannot catch it from - or pass it to another person.

Q: What causes Intertrigo?

A: Intertrigo is caused by excess trapped moisture in the folds of the skin, and is contributed to by an overgrowth of normal body yeast called *Candida albicans*, which thrives in the warm, moist environment of skin creases.

Q: How can I tell if I have Intertrigo?

A: You should consult a dermatologist for an accurate diagnosis and proper treatment since Intertrigo may resemble or be caused by other, more serious, skin conditions. In most cases a dermatologist can diagnose Intertrigo by its appearance, however, some tests may be necessary to rule out bacterial infections.

Q: What can I do to treat Intertrigo?

A: One simple way to help treat Intertrigo, regardless of severity is to allow air to reach the inflamed area. Twice a day, lift up the skin fold and allow air to circulate. Many cases of Intertrigo can be treated with over-the-counter antifungal creams such as clotrimazole or miconazole. Your doctor might also recommend Burow's solutions or applying a moist compresses followed by cool air blown on the affected areas. You might try using the cool setting of a hair dryer. More persistent rashes may require a short-term course of prescription topical steroids, and oral medications.

Q: I have a flare up of Intertrigo every year. Is there something I can do to prevent it?

A: You should keep the affected areas clean, dry, and exposed to air whenever possible, and if you are overweight, weight loss may provide some relief. Soft absorbent cotton placed in the affected areas to help absorb moisture can be helpful, and you may want to apply Zeasorb AF Powder.

Intertrigo relapses are common. Now that the warm, humid Lowcountry weather has arrived if you experience a flare up call Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry today for a consultation (843) 689-5259 (Hilton Head) or (843) 705-0840 (Bluffton / Okatie) to schedule an appointment for a consult.