

Under-breast soreness (intertrigo)

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What is under-breast soreness?

Under-breast soreness, or intertrigo, is an infection usually caused by a yeast condition called *Candida*, which comes from the same family of yeast infections that causes athlete's foot. It is a very common condition that can be easily treated and managed.

It can be particularly common in people who have diabetes, as diabetes can make the skin more prone to fungal and bacterial infections. If left untreated, under-breast soreness can worsen and spread to other parts of the body.

What are the causes of under-breast soreness?

- An excess of moisture trapped in the folds of the skin, which allows naturally-present organisms to multiply and cause discomfort.
- Friction from skin rubbing together.
- Under-breast soreness most commonly occurs in women with large breasts and active sporty individuals.



What are the symptoms?

- Inflammation
- Soreness/discomfort
- Spots and itching
- Discharge (pungent and creamy)
- Split skin

How is it treated?

The most effective treatment for under-breast soreness is to:

- Wash the affected area morning and night and pat dry, rather than rub dry.
- Wear good supportive bras. This will help stop the 'skin to skin' rubbing. Cotton is known to be effective. Nylon bras are known to make the condition worse.
- Do not share flannels or towels, to avoid the spread of infection.
- In cases where the skin is very red, very inflamed and sore, ask your pharmacist for a hydrocortisone cream*.
- In cases where the skin is red, sore or itchy, ask your pharmacist for an anti-fungal cream* or powder.
- Once the infection has cleared, it may be advisable to use a barrier cream* (i.e. zinc and castor oil) on a regular basis to help stop the infection returning.

* Hydrocortisone, anti-fungal creams/powders and barrier creams are all available over the counter. Please follow instructions.

What is the expected outcome of treatment?

Under breast soreness is very treatable. However if none of the above treatments help or your symptoms worsen, make an appointment to see your GP.

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PALS

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