Jock Itch (tinea cruris)

Jock itch is a fungal infection of the skin in the groin. It usually starts as a red patch and as it spreads, the lesions become larger and more numerous. The center of these patches may partially clear and the borders will become slightly elevated. The symptoms may extend into the thighs and buttocks. In most males, the scrotum is not affected. Jock itch can cause a great deal of itching and irritation. A typical source of the infection is a patient’s own athlete’s foot infection (tinea pedis). It is much more common in men and in those who are obese. Sweating, warm weather and tight clothing all increase the risk of developing a fungal infection in the groin, as a warm, moist environment promotes fungal growth.

A health care provider can diagnose this condition by taking a skin scraping for microscopic examination or culture. Other conditions can look similar to a fungal infection. If you decide to self-diagnose and treat, it is important to seek medical attention if there is no improvement within one to two weeks or the condition worsens.

TREATMENT
CAUTION: The use of steroid preparations (hydrocortisone) is not recommended in the treatment of jock itch, as steroids may actually spread a fungal infection and can make diagnosis more difficult. Most cases of jock itch can be treated with topical antifungal medications (do not use Nystatin). There are a number of topical anti-fungal products available over-the-counter (OTC) and by prescription. Be sure to use the medication as directed. It should be continued for 1-2 weeks beyond symptom resolution. If the infection is resistant to topical medication, a health care provider can prescribe anti-fungal pills. Also, OTC Sarna lotion is available to help decrease the itching associated with jock itch.

PREVENTION
There are ways to reduce the risk of getting jock itch. A daily application of Zeasorb powder will keep the area dry and decrease the risk of a recurrence. It is important to avoid hot baths, not wear tight or rough textured clothing and keep the area clean and dry. Men should wear boxer shorts and not briefs. Always treat athlete’s foot to prevent spreading the infection to the groin.

References
UpToDate web site, www.uptodate.com

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu