

Tinea Versicolor

What is tinea versicolor?

Tinea versicolor is a skin condition caused by a yeastlike fungus called *Malassezia furfur*. Tinea versicolor means "multicolored ringworm." It is more common in warm, humid climates. The condition occurs in adolescents and adults.

Symptoms include:

- 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 (often pink or brown) than normal skin.

How long will it last?

The problem tends to come and go for many years. There are no serious complications. It is a cosmetic problem. Itching is uncommon.

How is it treated?

- **Selsun Blue shampoo**

Selsun Blue (selenium sulfide) is a nonprescription medicated shampoo that helps this condition. Apply this shampoo once a day for 14 days. Apply it to the affected skin areas as well as 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, since it is irritating to these tissues. After 30 minutes, take a shower. In 2 weeks the scaling should be stopped, and the rash temporarily cured. Normal skin color will not return for 6 to 12 months.

- **Prevention of recurrences**

Tinea versicolor tends to recur. Prevent this by applying Selsun Blue shampoo on the areas that were affected previously once a month for several years. Leave it on for 1 to 2 hours, then shower. This precaution is especially important in the summer months because this fungus thrives in warm weather.

- **Contagiousness**

Tinea versicolor is not contagious. This fungus is found on the hair follicles in many people. Only a few develop the overgrowth of the fungus and a rash.

When should I call my healthcare provider?

Call during office hours if:

- The rash is not improved with this treatment after 2 weeks.

- You feel your child is getting worse.
- You have other questions or concerns.

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