

Understanding under-breast soreness (Intertrigo)

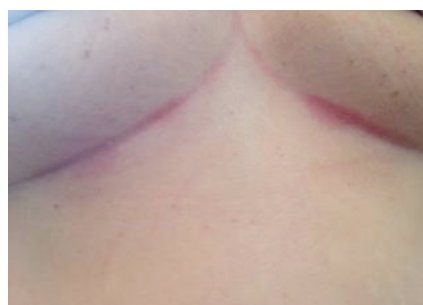
Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about under-breast soreness (intertrigo) including how the condition can be treated and managed.



What is under-breast soreness?

Under-breast soreness (UBS), commonly known as intertrigo, is a medical condition which usually affects women who are larger breasted or very sporty. Intertrigo is an infection caused by the yeast condition 'Candida albicans' which comes from the same family of yeast infections that cause 'athlete's foot'. Intertrigo can easily be treated.



Causes

The main causes of intertrigo are sweat rashes, 'skin to skin' rubbing and the growth of yeast which appears as a rash in the skin fold under the breast. If untreated, it may worsen, become infected and possibly spread to other parts of the body. In some cases, it can lead to a creamy coloured discharge with a pungent (strong) smell.



Diabetes can also affect the skin, making it more prone to fungal and bacterial infections.

Symptoms of intertrigo

The main symptoms are:

- Inflammation
- Soreness/discomfort
- Redness/split skin
- Spots
- Itching
- Discharge (often smelly).



These symptoms can range from mild or moderate, to severe.

Treatment

The most effective treatment for UBS is:

- Wash the area regularly and pat dry rather than rubbing.
- Wear a good supportive bra to reduce 'skin to skin' rubbing. Cotton is more effective than nylon, which is known to make the condition worse.
- Avoid sharing flannels or towels to prevent spreading any infection.
- If the skin is red, sore and itchy, apply an anti-fungal* cream or powder.
- If the skin is very red, inflamed or sore, apply a hydrocortisone* cream
- Once the infection has cleared, it may be advisable to use a barrier* cream to help stop the infection returning.
- Hydrocortisone, anti-fungal creams/powders and barrier creams are all available over the counter. If you are uncertain of which treatment is most suitable, please ask the pharmacist for advice.

If none of the above treatments help or your symptoms worsen, please make an appointment to see your GP.



Further information

MedicineNet

Website: www.medicinenet.com/intertrigo/article.htm

Acknowledgment

Adapted from the research undertaken by Marilyn O'Connell, Assistant Practitioner in Breast Screening, King's Lynn.

Content reviewed: January 2023



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GHPI1768_01_23
Department: Thirlestaine Breast Centre
Review due: January 2026
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