

## TINEA VERSICOLOR

### **Definition**

A chronic fungal infection of the skin.

### **Causes, incidence, and risk factors**

Tinea versicolor is a relatively common skin infection caused by the fungus (yeast) *Pityrosporum orbiculare*. *P. orbiculare* is considered part of the normal flora on human skin (the microorganisms that are normally found on the skin of humans) and only becomes infectious under certain circumstances.

The most commonly affected sites are the underarm, upper arms, chest, and neck. The typical lesion is a flat discoloration with a sharp border and fine scales. In dark-skinned persons, pigmentary changes are common with hypopigmentation (loss of color) or hyperpigmentation (increase in skin color). Itching may or may not be present. Tinea versicolor is more common in hot climates and is associated with increased sweating. It occurs more commonly in adolescents and young men.

### **Prevention**

Maintain dry skin when possible.

### **Symptoms**

- persistent patches of discolored skin
- lesion has sharp borders
- lesion has fine scales
- most common sites: underarm, upper arm, chest, neck
- associated with hot climates
- associated with increased sweating
- itching

### **Signs and tests**

Upon examination under a Woods lamp (a kind of ultraviolet light) the lesions will glow. A skin scraping and subsequent examination under a microscope may show the yeast.

### **Treatment**

Antifungal agents are effective in eradicating the lesions. These medications include clotrimazole, ketoconazole, miconazole. Other agents have been successful including selenium sulfide preparations such as is found in Selsun shampoo or lotion.

### **Prognosis**

Tinea versicolor is easily cured by a variety of preparations. Conditions that caused its appearance will, if not changed, cause recurrences of the infection.

### **Complications**

There are no serious complications. Discomfort from itching, changes in skin appearance, and recurrence of the condition are the most common complications.