

# Understanding under-breast soreness (intertrigo)

## Breast Imaging

Information for Patients

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### **What causes under-breast soreness?**

Under-breast soreness usually occurs in women who have larger breasts or are very sporty.

The main causes are sweat rash, 'skin to skin' rubbing and the growth of yeast, which appear as a rash in the skinfold under the breast. This is also called intertrigo. Intertrigo is an infection caused by a yeast known as "Candida albicans". It comes from the same family of yeast infections that cause athlete's foot and nappy rash.

If left untreated, intertrigo can spread to other parts of the body or get worse. In some cases it can lead to a creamy-coloured discharge that has a strong smell.

Intertrigo is very common. This leaflet is to raise awareness of the condition and promote self care.

### **What are the symptoms of intertrigo?**

The main symptoms are:

- inflammation
- soreness or discomfort
- split skin
- spots
- itching
- discharge (often has a strong smell)

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## What is the most effective treatment?

The best treatment for under-breast soreness is to follow the advice below:

- Wash the affected area morning and night and pat dry, rather than rubbing dry. Wear good supportive bras made of cotton. This will help stop the 'skin to skin' rubbing (nylon bras will make the condition worse).
- Do not share flannels or towels with other people, to avoid the spread of infection.
- If your skin is very red, inflamed and sore, ask your pharmacist for a hydrocortisone cream.
- If your 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, for example zinc and castor oil, to help stop the infection returning.
- Hydrocortisone cream, anti-fungal creams and powders, and barrier creams, are all available over-the-counter; please follow the instructions for use.
- If none of the above treatments help or your symptoms worsen, make an appointment to see your doctor.

## Further information

For further information or advice contact your local doctor, pharmacy or breast screening unit.

The Breast Screening Office at Glenfield Hospital can be contacted on 0116 258 3644:

Monday to Thursday - 8.15am to 5.45pm

Friday - 8.15am to 4.45pm

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