



Tinea Versicolor

- Tinea Versicolor (T.V.) is a common infection of the skin caused by a yeast called *Malassezia furfur* (*M. furfur*). It affects 2-8% of the U.S. population.
- The yeast (*M. furfur*) that causes TV can be found as normal flora on the skin of 90-100% of adults, thus it is not contagious.
- Although T.V. can temporarily discolor your skin, it is not permanent and your skin color will recover over a period of 3-6 months once adequately treated.
- Hot, humid climates and sweating predispose to T.V.; thus, T.V. commonly flares in the summer. People who are susceptible to T.V. often get it repeatedly, generally during the summer.
- The yeast that causes T.V. can either cause lightening (more common) or in some cases darkening of the skin. It is often more noticeable in the summer months due to sun exposure; affected skin does not tan normally.
- T.V. generally involves the chest, abdomen, back, shoulders and upper arms. It rarely affects the face or lower legs.

Treatment for T.V.

Topical (on the skin) treatment

- Various shampoos applied in a lather on the affected areas of skin for 10-15 minutes, repeated 2-3 times per week for 2-4 weeks can be very effective. Make sure to leave the preparation on the skin for 10–15 minutes before rinsing. Treatment of all the skin from the neck down to the knees, even if only a small area is visibly involved, may lead to higher success rates.
- [Selsun Blue shampoo](#) (which contains selenium sulfide) is a good one to start with as it is cheap and quite effective.
- Other shampoos that can be effective are [Nizoral](#) (ketoconazole) shampoo – this is available OTC as 1% strength and by prescription at 2% strength.
- Once the eruption clears, Selsun Blue or Nizoral can be used once or twice weekly as a preventative measure.
- If you have a more localized area involved, a topical cream is also an option, such as ketoconazole cream (requires a prescription) or [clotrimazole cream](#) (which is available OTC). Note that the creams should be left on the skin overnight or all day. Terbinafine/Lamisil cream does not work well for T.V.

Oral (pill by mouth) treatment

- Regimen: Fluconazole 300 mg once weekly for 2-3 weeks (i.e., take 300 mg of pills on Monday, repeat weekly as directed on Monday, etc)
- Fluconazole is secreted in sweat, so it works best if one exercises 30 minutes after taking the pills and then avoids showering for a 1-2 hours after exercising.
- Fluconazole can very rarely cause liver toxicity, but it is usually well tolerated

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