

## **Antitinea Drugs**

Tinea is an infectious skin disease caused by fungal parasites on the skin. Fungus is a parasitic microorganism fond of humid environment. Things going “mouldy”, a common phenomenon in our everyday life, is one example of fungal growth. Common types of tinea found on humans are:

1. Tinea pedis (commonly known as “athlete’s foot”) usually infects the skin between toes. There may be symptoms of blisters or peeling off of dry and cracked skin, resulting in strong itchiness at the infected sites. Improper treatment may lead to the development of bacterial dermatitis and pus-producing lesions.
2. Tinea corporis is a collective term for all kinds of tinea which infect the skin. Examples include tinea glabrosa (also called tinea circinata) which infects the torso and tinea cruris which infects the groin.
3. Tinea unguium is the tinea which usually infects toe nails and sometimes finger nails. Infected nails will show a change in colour and shape as well as an increase in thickness.
4. Pityriasis versicolor is a kind of fungal infection in which light-coloured patches are developed on the skin. Infected sites may become itchy.

Note: Psoriasis is a non-fungal infection of the skin and it is not infectious. Antitinea drugs do not work for this skin disease. Medical advice and treatment should be sought.

### **Classification of the Drugs**

Common antitinea drugs are:

1. Drugs for external use include water-based and oil-based ointments to be applied on the infected areas. Oil-based ointments could be used in case of dry and cracked skin but they are ineffective for tinea unguium. Common examples are undecenoic acid and undecenoate as well as benzoic acid and salicylic acid.
2. Griseofulvin is a common drug to be taken internally to treat tinea. It is mainly intended for tinea unguium, or tinea corporis not reacting to medicines for external use.

## **Advice on Medication**

1. There are two kinds of medication for treatment, external and oral. You are advised to consult your doctor for diagnosis before deciding on the choice of medication. Under normal circumstances, antitinea drugs for external use should be sufficient for ordinary tinea and scabies. Patience is required in treating tinea and scabies. Infected areas should be treated with care to prevent bacterial infection. Areas infected previously but fully recovered have to remain clean all the time to prevent relapse. Oral medication takes a longer time to work. For example, oral drugs for tinea unguium have to be taken regularly for at least six months before they can become effective. Persistence should be exercised during medication for complete recovery.
2. Before applying antitinea drugs, the infected sites should be cleaned by, say, washing with water.
3. In case of allergy, redness and swelling or itchiness after applying medicines for external drugs, consult your doctor. Oral drugs generally have just fewer side effects and the common ones are stomach upset, diarrhoea and headache. These adverse reactions could be relieved if the drugs are taken on a full stomach.
4. Medicines other than the antitinea drugs prescribed by your doctor should not be used indiscriminately, as this may aggravate your conditions and make treatment more difficult. In particular, do not use steroid-containing drugs which would facilitate fungal growth and complicate your conditions.

## **Life Adaptations**

1. Patients should attend to personal hygiene and wear proper clothes to keep the infected areas dry and cool. Patients who sweat a lot should take frequent baths. Patients suffering from athlete's foot should not wear nylon socks and change their socks frequently. Patients suffering from tinea cruris should avoid wearing tight pants such as jeans.
2. To avoid cross-infection, do not use the personal stuff of other people.
3. Do not scratch the infected areas, as this may cause inflammation. Immersing and washing the infected areas with overly hot water is not advisable.
4. Diabetes patients are especially prone to tinea and should therefore pay attention

to personal hygiene and proper control of diabetes.

5. Always keep your clothes clean and dry to prevent easy relapse of tinea.

### **Storage of the Drugs**

The drugs should be stored in a dry and cool place. They do not need to be refrigerated unless otherwise stated on the labels. Also, oral drugs should be stored properly to avoid accidents of mistaken consumption by children.