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Understanding under-breast soreness (Intertrigo)

Breast Care Centre

Information for Patients

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What causes under-breast soreness?

Under-breast soreness often happens in women who have larger breasts or are very sporty.

The main causes are:

- sweat rash,
- ‘skin to skin’ rubbing,
- 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 called “Candida albicans”. It comes from the same family of yeast infections that cause athlete’s foot and nappy rash.

If 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. We have made this leaflet 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),

What is the most effective treatment?

Best treatment for under-breast soreness:

- Wash the affected area morning and night. Make sure to pat dry. Do not rub.
- 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. This stops 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. This helps to 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.

More information

For more 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

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice
Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester’s Hospitals.
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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