

Protect Yourself from Swimmer's Itch

Swimmer's itch (cercarial dermatitis) is caused by a parasite that lives in waterfowl and snails. People can get symptoms when the parasite penetrates the skin.

Swimmer's itch symptoms include an itchy rash, raised red bumps and tenderness of the skin. Symptoms can appear minutes to days after exposure and can last for several days. Most cases do not require medical treatment.

Steps to Prevent Swimmer's Itch

- Don't swim, wade or recreate in water with waterfowl, snails or weeds. Avoid areas with cloudy water, blooms and scum.
- Towel dry thoroughly after contact with water. Rinse off and towel dry at the end of the day.
- Help spread the word in your community by reporting symptoms of swimmer's itch to your local health department (www.health.ny.gov/EnvironmentalContacts).

Turn over to learn more.



Learn More

Who is at Risk?

Anyone can get swimmer's itch. Children are more likely to get swimmer's itch than adults because kids spend more time in shallow waters where the parasite may be present, and are less likely to towel dry. Swimmer's itch is not contagious; it cannot be passed from person to person.

How to Treat Swimmer's Itch

Most cases of swimmer's itch get better on their own. Over-the-counter and home remedies such as anti-itch and corticosteroid creams, cool compresses, Epsom salts, baking soda and colloidal oatmeal baths can help to soothe symptoms.

Try not to scratch. Scratching affected areas can cause a bacterial infection. If itching is severe, contact a health care provider, who might suggest prescription strength lotions or creams.

More Information

www.cdc.gov/parasites/swimmersitch/faqs.html