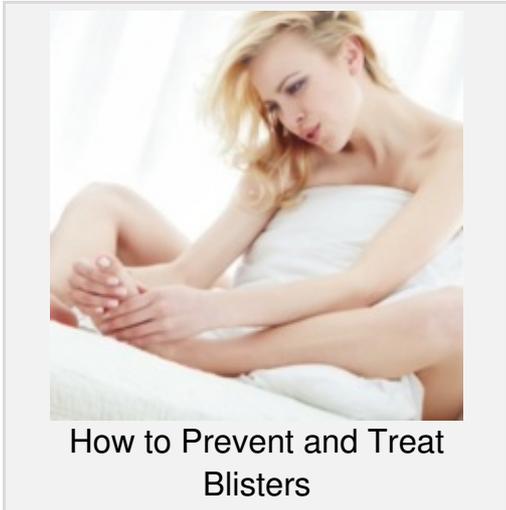


How to Prevent and Treat Blisters

2016-07-12



Whether it's because you started running more or just got a new pair of sandals, it seems like summer is the season for blisters. And while we often think of blisters on our feet, dermatologists say that these painful skin irritations can occur anywhere on the body where body parts rub together or rub against clothing. Fortunately, they say, blisters can be prevented by preventing chafing.



"Prevention is really the key when it comes to blisters"

Prevention is really the key when it comes to blisters," said board-certified dermatologist Anthony Rossi, MD, FAAD, assistant professor of dermatology, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York City. "To stop them before they appear, pay attention to your skin and take precautions if you know you're going to do a lot of walking, running or other physical activity."

To prevent chafing that can lead to blisters, Dr. Rossi recommends the following tips:

Protect your feet: To prevent blisters on your feet, wear nylon or moisture-wicking socks. If wearing one pair of socks doesn't help, try wearing two pairs to protect your skin. You should also make sure your shoes fit properly. Shoes shouldn't be too tight or too loose.

Wear the right clothing: During physical activity, wear moisture-wicking, loose-fitting clothes. Avoid clothes made of cotton, as cotton soaks up sweat and moisture, which can lead to friction and chafing.

Consider soft bandages: For problem areas, such as the feet or thighs, consider using adhesive moleskin or other soft bandages. Make sure the bandages are applied securely.

Apply powder or petroleum jelly to problem areas: This helps reduce friction when your skin rubs together or rubs against clothing.

Stop your activity immediately if you experience pain or discomfort, or if your skin turns red: Otherwise, you may get a blister.

“If you do get a blister, be patient and try to leave it alone,” said Dr. Rossi. “Most blisters heal on their own in one to two weeks. Don’t resume the activity that caused your blister until it’s healed.”

To treat a blister, Dr. Rossi recommends the following tips:



Cover the blister: Loosely cover the blister with a bandage. Bring in the sides of the bandage so that the middle of the bandage is a little raised.

Use padding: To protect blisters in pressure areas, such as the bottom of your feet, use padding. Cut the padding into a donut shape with a hole in the middle and place it around the blister. Then, cover the blister and padding with a bandage.

Avoid popping or draining a blister, as this could lead to infection. However, if your blister is large and very painful, it may be necessary to drain the blister to reduce discomfort. To do this, sterilize a small needle using rubbing alcohol. Then, use the needle to carefully pierce one edge of the blister, which will allow some of the fluid to drain.

Keep the area clean and covered: Once your blister has drained, wash the area with soap and water and apply petroleum jelly. Do not remove the “roof” of the blister, as this will protect the raw skin underneath as it heals.

“As your blister heals, watch for signs of an infection,” said Dr. Rossi. “If you notice any redness, pus, or increased pain or swelling, make an appointment to see your doctor or a board-certified dermatologist.”

These tips are demonstrated in “How to Prevent and Treat Blisters,” a video posted to the AAD website and YouTube channel. This video is part of the AAD’s “Video of the Month” series, which offers tips people can use to properly care for their skin, hair and nails. A new video in the series posts to the AAD website and YouTube channel each month.

About the American Academy of Dermatology

Headquartered in Schaumburg, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology, founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 18,000 physicians worldwide, the AAD is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more

information, contact the AAD at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or www.aad.org

Photo courtesy of BP photostock