

Swimmers Itch:

Source: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/swimmers-itch>

Swimmer's itch is a temporary, itchy rash caused by small worm-like parasites called schistosomes. Sometimes larvae might get on your skin if you are swimming or wading in water. The larvae burrow under your skin, but they cannot survive in humans and will die almost immediately. It is the reaction to these tiny larvae under the skin that causes swimmer's itch. Swimmer's itch does not spread from person to person.



How to avoid swimmers itch:

- Apply lotion/sunscreen before entering the water to acts as a barrier. If out of the water for a period of time, reapply lotion before re-entering the water.
- Do not wade or lay in the shallow water for extended periods of time.
- Towel off as soon as possible upon leaving the water. Try not to allow the water to dry on your skin.
- If possible, shower immediately after leaving the water.



What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms can range from a mild irritation to a very severe, itchy red rash. Scratching can cause severe pain and swelling or cause your skin to become infected.
- The reaction may last from 2 to 5 days and symptoms can last up to 2 weeks.



How to treat swimmer's itch:

Check with your health care provider such as your local pharmacist or family doctor about what treatment is right for you.

- Apply plain calamine lotion.
- Take colloidal oatmeal baths.
- Take shallow, lukewarm baths with 3 tablespoons of baking soda in the water.
- Avoid scratching.
- Apply cool compresses.

