

Training Tip #16

Rash

Rashes are difficult to interpret without actually seeing them. If you have a persistent rash or any other symptoms associated with a rash, see your doctor for evaluation. A discussion of all possible rashes is beyond the scope of this training tip, however, a common rash seen among walkers is a condition called “Capillaritis.” Many walkers develop a rash on their legs without any complaint of injury or trauma.

This rash may be slightly itchy but is NOT associated with any lower leg swelling, shortness of breath, fever, chills, red streaks or pain. Capillaritis is a harmless skin condition in which there are small reddish-brown patches caused by leaky capillaries (very tiny blood vessels), primarily on the legs. The capillaries become inflamed, resulting in tiny red dots that look like cayenne pepper appearing on the skin.

The cause is unknown but this rash develops with prolonged impact activities such as walking. Blood thinning medications such as aspirin, non-steroidal medications such as ibuprofen, and birth control pills may increase its occurrence. There is no known cure for most causes of Capillaritis. It usually disappears within a few weeks, but may recur. Legs with Capillaritis should be kept cool and protected from UV light. Reapply sunscreen to your legs every 2–3 miles or at each pit.

Repeated rubbing of clothing against the skin may cause a contact irritant rash. It usually is blotchy and red and can be itchy and burn. There usually are no other associated symptoms. Sweating can cause clothing that was previously ok to become an irritant. Use absorbent socks and clothing that remove moisture from your skin and remove damp sweaty clothing as soon as possible after exercise.

Check your walking outfits for seams that might cause a friction rub. Use petroleum jelly, body glide like products or zinc oxide (Desitin) to prevent chafing in friction areas. Avoid perfumed lotions, deodorants or soaps that may increase your skin’s sensitivity. Test your sunscreen on a training walk to see if it is irritating to your skin or your eyes.