



Photo: Rich Galliano

# Sea Itch



Dr. Laura Tanner

**Sea Itch** is the name given to two types of rash — swimmer's itch and seabather's eruption — that occur from swimming in salt water. Both itch equally as much!!

### Swimmer's Itch

This occurs primarily on the exposed areas like the arms and legs and is the result of penetration of the skin by microscopic larvae or cercaria.

When the little organisms get into the skin a reaction is initiated by the immune system and chemicals are released from the immune system to try to stop the insult to the body. The immune chemicals, like histamine, cause the itch.

Fortunately these organisms don't like humans and do not cause deeper infections. The rash will eventually just fade as the organisms die off in the skin.

### Seabather's Eruption

This is usually confined to covered areas under the swimsuit like the abdomen,

buttocks and breasts. This rash does not involve the penetration of the skin by organisms.

It is an irritant reaction to the skin from multiple causes such as sea nettles, jelly fish and algae. This rash, like swimmer's itch, is also self-limited if left alone.

### Treatment

Over-the-counter antihistamines like benedryl or topical agents like benedryl cream or cortisone creams provide relief for both.

### Prevention

- Scrub well with soap and water after swimming in the ocean.
- Avoid swimming in the same site as those who got the rash. ●●

## Cayman Islands Cancer Society ~ getting to the heart of matters

The Cayman Islands Cancer Society has been leading the charge for cancer awareness in the Islands for over 16 years. Evolving from an informal gathering of four women in 1982, the non-profit Society has grown – through donations, memberships, volunteerism and fundraising activities – into a stalwart organisation offering:



- age-appropriate programmes to schools, corporations, community groups
- educational seminars on specific cancer issues
- home-care equipment e.g. beds, wheelchairs etc, free of charge
- financial aid for cancer patients' medical expenses
- a free six-week group-based "quit smoking" programme
- a Befrienders support group for cancer patients and their families

The Society's recently-held Red Dress Affair, held in conjunction with the Baptist Hospital, turned the spotlight on heart disease in women and smoking-related damage to the body. Riveting presentations were made by Dr. Edward Peron, on heart disease, and Dr. Javier Perez-Fernandez on the effects of smoking.

For information on the Cayman Islands Cancer Society, please call 949-7618, or e-mail: [cicansoc@candw.ky](mailto:cicansoc@candw.ky) or visit the website at [www.caymanislandscancersociety.ky](http://www.caymanislandscancersociety.ky).

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