



# RINGWORM (TINEA CORPORIS)

## WHAT IS RINGWORM?

Ringworm is a skin disease caused by many different fungi (plural for fungus). It gets its name from the characteristic ring-like rash on the skin of the face, neck, trunk, arms, or legs. It is not a parasite or worm under the skin as the name may lead one to believe. The rash starts out as a small, itchy, circular, raised, scaly patch that enlarges. As it enlarges, there is central clearing making a reddish, raised, scaly ring. Approximately 40 different species of fungi can cause ringworm. Medical terms for fungal infections of the skin and nails are "tinea" or "dermatophytosis". The different types of fungi that affect skin structures often have a name that designates the skin structure or area of the body involved. Many are treated similarly, some more easily than others. They include:

- Feet (tinea pedis, commonly called "athlete's foot")
- Groin, inner thighs, or buttocks (tinea cruris, commonly called "jock itch")
- Scalp (tinea capitis)
- Beard (tinea barbae)
- Hands (tinea manuum)
- Toenails or fingernails (tinea unguium, also called "onychomycosis")

## WHO CAN GET RINGWORM?

Anyone can get ringworm. People are infected by direct contact with an infected animal or person - most infections are spread person-to-person.

## WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF RINGWORM?

Most often one develops patches that are hairless, circular, or irregularly shaped areas of scaling, crusting, and redness that may or may not be itchy. The area may not be completely hairless, and instead have brittle, broken hairs.

## HOW IS RINGWORM SPREAD?

The disease is spread by touching an infected person or animal. It can also be spread by touching objects or surfaces that had contact with the infection. If infected, people often begin itching four to fourteen days after contact. The rash may be scaly, reddened, and circular. When the scalp is involved it often makes a bald patch of scaly skin.

Incubation Period Usually 7-21 days. Infectious Period Ringworm is infectious during the duration of skin or scalp lesions and while the fungus persists on contaminated materials.

Animals, like people, get infected through touching an infected animal's skin or hair or by touching things that are infected with the fungus, like blankets and towels.

Many kinds of animals can transmit ringworm to people. Dogs and cats, especially kittens or puppies, can have ringworm that can be passed to people. Cows, goats, pigs, and horses can also pass ringworm to people. Spores of the ringworm fungus can survive for a long time on carpet, furniture, or other surfaces, and cause infections.

## HOW IS RINGWORM DIAGNOSED?

### For People

Your doctor may test skin scrapings or nail clippings for the fungus or diagnosed based on clinical findings.

### For Pets

Your veterinarian may test some fur for the fungus.

## HOW IS RINGWORM TREATED?

### For People

Ask your doctor about proper treatment for ringworm. Some infections can get better if you keep your skin clean and dry, apply drying powders, lotions, or creams, and wash your bed sheets and clothes every day while you are infected.

Usually, you will need to use antifungal ointments or creams, or take antifungal pills that your medical provider may prescribe. A wrestler will usually need a recheck with their medical provider before returning to wrestling (about a week after treatment starts).

### For Pets

Treating animals for ringworm can help them clear the infection sooner and prevent spreading the infection to other people and animals. Your veterinarian may prescribe antifungal shampoos or creams, dips, or antifungal pills. During this time, the pet should be handled as little as possible until the infection is cleared.

## HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT RINGWORM?

### For People

- Vacuuming areas of the home that pets commonly visit helps to remove fur or flakes of skin.
- Wash your hands with soap and running water after playing with or petting your pet.
- Wear gloves and long sleeves if you must handle animals with ringworm, and always wash your hands after handling the animal.
- Vacuum the areas of the home that the infected pet commonly visits. This will help to remove infected fur or flakes of skin.
- Disinfect areas the pet has spent time in, including surfaces and bedding.
- The spores of this fungus can be killed with common disinfectants like chlorine bleach diluted 1:10 (1/4 cup in 1 gallon of water), benzalkonium chloride, or strong detergents.
- Never mix cleaning products. This may cause harmful gases.

**Do not handle animals with ringworm if your immune system is weak in any way (if you have HIV/AIDS, are undergoing cancer treatment, or are taking medications that suppress the immune system, for example).**

### For Pets

- If you suspect that your pet has ringworm, make sure it is seen by a veterinarian so treatment can be started.
- If one of your pets has ringworm, make sure you have every pet in the household checked for ringworm infection.



## DOES MY CHILD NEED TO STAY HOME FROM CHILDCARE/SCHOOL?

**YOUR CHILD SHOULD NOT ATTEND CHILDCARE/SCHOOL IF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING APPLIES:**

- They have not yet begun treatment for ringworm.