



Ringworm

What is Ringworm?

Ringworm is a skin infection caused by a fungus. Ringworm can affect skin on your body, scalp, groin area or feet. Ringworm is a common skin disorder especially among children, but can affect people of all ages.

How is Ringworm spread?

Ringworm is contagious. It can be passed from one person to another by direct skin-to-skin contact, by contaminated items such as combs, unwashed clothing and shower and pool surfaces. You can get ringworm from pets that carry the fungus. Cats are common carriers.

How is Ringworm treated?

- Ringworm usually responds to self-care within four weeks without having to see the doctor.
- Apply over-the-counter antifungal or drying powder, lotion or cream. Those containing miconazole or clotrimazole or similar ingredients are often effective.
- Call your doctor if you have ringworm of the scalp or beard or if your infection does not improve after four weeks of self-treatment.
- Use medication prescribed for the number of days recommended. Wash your hands with soap and water before and after applying the medication.

How can Ringworm be prevented?

- Do not share clothing, towels, hairbrushes, combs, headgear, socks, shoes, hats, scarves, hair ornaments, or other personal care items.
- Launder bed linens, wash clothes and towels in hot soapy water after each use.

- Do not walk barefoot in public places. Wear sandals or shoes at gyms, lockers, and pools.
- Keep your skin and feet clean and dry.
- Use separate towels and wash clothes for each person in the home.
- Avoid handling pets with bald spots.

Symptoms of Ringworm:

- Round patches of red, dry skin surrounded by red raised ring.
- Sometimes the ring has blisters or is crusted with blisters. Hair in the ring is broken or absent.
- As the patch spreads or enlarges, the skin in the center may appear clear.
- When scalp or beard is infected, you will have bald patches.

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CDC Public Information

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