
Ringworm

What You Need to Know



What is Ringworm?

Ringworm is an itchy skin disease caused by a fungus. Ringworm can affect skin on your body, scalp, feet ("athlete's foot"), groin ("jock-itch"), or nails. There are 40 different species of fungi that can cause ringworm.

Who can get Ringworm?

Ringworm is a common skin disorder that can affect anyone, at any age.

How does a person get Ringworm?

A person can get Ringworm by direct skin to skin contact or by contact with contaminated items such as combs, unwashed towels or clothing and shower or pool surfaces. You can also get Ringworm from pets that carry the fungus. Cats and dogs are common carriers.

What does Ringworm look like?

Ringworm often looks like a round patch of red, dry skin and has a red raised ring around the "patch". Sometimes the ring has blisters or is crusted with water or pus-filled blisters. When your scalp is infected, you will have bald patches. If nails are infected, they become discolored, thick and can crumble.

How long after exposure to the fungi before the first signs of the disease appear?

Four to 14 days after exposure.

How is Ringworm diagnosed?

You healthcare provider may take a small skin scraping to examine under a microscope or send to a laboratory for a fungal culture.

What is the treatment for Ringworm?

Ringworm on your skin can be treated with over-the-counter antifungal products that contain miconazole, clotrimazole, or similar ingredients. These products usually clear the fungus within four weeks. Wash sheets and night clothes everyday while infected. Infected pets should also be treated. A doctor should treat severe or persistent infections and infections of the scalp.

How can Ringworm be prevented?

- Keep your skin and feet clean and dry
- Shampoo regularly
- Do not share clothing, towels, hairbrushes, combs, athletic equipment, or other personal items
- Wear sandals or shoes at public gyms, lockers, showers and pools

- Do not touch pets with bald spots and wash hands with soap and water after playing with pets.
- If involved in close contact sports, shower immediately after practice or match.

HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use soap and running water
- Rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- Wash all surfaces, including:
 - backs of hands
 - wrists
 - between fingers
 - under fingernails
- Rinse well
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands



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