

FactSheet

Para Su Información

Ringworm

What is ringworm?

Ringworm is a skin infection caused by a fungus. The infection causes a rash that may have a ring-shape with a raised edge. It is usually quite itchy and flaky. When the scalp is infected, there is often an area of baldness. Fungal infections of the feet are usually very itchy and cause cracking between the toes.

Other names for ringworm include tinea, dermatophytosis, athlete's foot (ringworm of the feet), and jock itch (ringworm of the groin).

How is it spread?

You can get ringworm from people, animals, objects or places. Ringworm spreads from person to person by touch. When someone with ringworm touches or scratches the rash, the fungus sticks to the fingers or gets under the fingernails. The fungus is then spread when that person touches someone else. Ringworm can also be spread by using items such as clothes, towels, or hairbrushes that were used by someone with a ringworm infection. Animals can carry some types of fungi on their fur or skin without showing signs of ringworm infection. Sick or carrier animals can transmit fungi to people by direct or indirect (hair or dander) contact. Places like gyms, shower stalls, and floors can transmit fungus if used by someone with ringworm. Other people can catch the fungus if exposed to these places.

What is the treatment?

Ringworm can be cured with medication. Some medications are taken by mouth; others are ointments or creams to be placed on the infected area. You can avoid spreading ringworm to others by:

- Following your doctor's advice for proper treatment

- Keeping your skin, hair and nails clean and dry
- Washing towels and clothing in hot soapy water to destroy the fungus
- Staying away from common areas such as community pools and gyms until your infection goes away
- Returning to school or childcare facility after treatment has been initiated

How can I prevent ringworm?

- Do not share clothing, towels, hairbrushes or other personal items
- Keep common-use areas clean
- Use a floor and bath cleaner that contains a fungus-killing (called fungicidal) agent, e.g. common household bleach or cresol (specific type of disinfectant)
- Use good handwashing techniques

Where can I get more information?

Contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District, Office of Epidemiology at (702) 759-1300.



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