

Ringworm Information Sheet

What is Ringworm?

Ringworm gets its name from its appearance on the skin. It looks like a ring-shaped rash. Ringworm is a fungal infection of the skin and may affect many areas of the body, including the head and scalp, the body, the feet, or the groin. Symptoms may vary with the location:

- Head and scalp - small raised sores on scalp leaving scaly patches of temporary baldness. The incubation period is 10-14 days.
- Body - flat ring-shaped sores with reddened edges. May be blister-like or dry and crusty. The incubation period is 4-10 days.
- Feet - scaling or cracking of skin between toes, under and around toenails. It can be very itchy. The incubation period is unknown.

How is it spread?

The fungi occur world-wide and are spread by contact with infected people, animals or objects. A person with ringworm remains infectious as long as the fungus remains present in the skin lesion. Fungus is capable of surviving in contaminated material for a long period of time.

What should I do if my child or I get Ringworm?

- Follow your doctor's advice for proper treatment.
- If the lesion cannot be covered, exclude a child with ringworm until after treatment has begun and the lesion has started to shrink.
- Dry skin thoroughly after washing.
- Wash towels and clothing in hot water and soap or fungicidal agent to destroy fungus.
- Vacuum carpeted areas and upholstered furniture.
- Stay away from common areas such as community pools and gyms until your infection goes away.

How is Ringworm prevented?

- Avoid touching an infected area, and if you do touch it, practise good hand washing.
- Keep common-use areas clean and wear appropriate footwear when using public showers.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as hair care articles, towels, clothing, and shoes.
- Have pets with skin rashes examined by a veterinarian. If the pet's rash is caused by fungus, children should not come into contact with the pet until the rash has been treated and heals, and the pet has been bathed.

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For further information, please call:
York Region Health Services *Health Connection*
1-800-361-5653
www.region.york.on.ca