

Ringworm

Ringworm is a skin infection caused by a fungus. It is not caused by a worm. The types of fungi (plural of fungus) that cause ringworm grow best in warm, moist areas. Ringworm is contagious. It is spread via skin-to-skin contact with other people who have ringworm and, less commonly, with animals having the infection. It can also spread by sharing things like towels, clothing or sports gear.

Ringworm usually causes an itchy rash. The rash often forms a ring-shaped lesion with a central clear area. More than one such lesion can be present with a ringworm infection. Most ringworm of the skin can be treated at home with over-the-counter antifungal creams (clotrimazole is most commonly used). It may take a few weeks for ringworm lesions to clear on appropriate antifungal therapy. For occasional ringworm lesions that are resistant to topical therapy, and for most cases of ringworm involving the scalp, oral antifungal therapy may be prescribed. As ringworm is a fungal infection, antibiotics are not helpful.

If your child is being treated for ringworm, there is no reason to keep him or her out of school or daycare.

To prevent ringworm, don't share clothing, sports gear, towels or sheets. If you think you have been exposed to ringworm, wash your clothes in hot water and thoroughly wash the involved area of skin.

When to call:

- If you have a suspected ringworm lesion which is not responding to antifungal therapy after 2 weeks, or if new lesions continue to appear despite therapy.
- If a suspected or confirmed ringworm lesion starts to look infected (redness of the skin spreading away from the lesion, particularly in a streaking fashion, or pus formation within the lesion).
- If your child has a suspected ringworm lesion on his or her scalp.



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