

Fact Sheet: Ringworm

What is Ringworm?

Ringworm is a skin disease that is caused by fungi. Some of the common places ringworm grows are the feet (athlete's foot), groin ("jock" or "gym" itch), scalp, face, or nails.

What are the symptoms?

- Round patches of red, dry skin with a raised ring around the "patch".
- Ringworm in the scalp usually causes a bald patch of scaly skin.
- Nails gradually thicken, discolor and become brittle.
- If found on the feet - scaling and cracking of the skin or the presence of water-filled blisters found between toes.
- Symptoms usually appear 10-14 days after exposure.

How is it spread?

Ringworm is spread through direct skin to skin contact with a person infected with ringworm. Ringworm may also be spread through contaminated floors in locker rooms or showers, or from sharing combs, brushes, towels, or clothing with an infected person. Animals, especially cats, may be carriers without having symptoms.

How is it treated?

- See your health care provider if you think you have ringworm. Most often an antifungal medicine will be prescribed to treat the ringworm.
- Wash the patch daily with soap and water and use the medication as directed.
- Keep skin and feet dry and clean.
- Wash sheets and night clothes daily while infected.

How is it prevented?

- Do not share people's combs, brushes, hair bows, hats, scarves, towels, washcloths, socks or shoes.
- Wear shoes in public places.
- Wear shoes or flip-flops at gyms, locker rooms, and pools.
- Clean floors in gyms, dressing rooms, and showers daily, and pool areas frequently with an anti-fungal agent.
- Keep your skin and feet dry and clean, especially between the toes.
- Shampoo regularly, especially after haircuts.
- Avoid touching pets with bald spots.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self -diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

