



# Ringworm

## What is ringworm?

- Ringworm is a group of skin infections caused by mold-like fungi called dermatophytes that live on the dead tissues of the skin, hair, and nails.
- Children can catch ringworm directly from an infected person, pet or soil.
- Your child can also catch the infection from hats, combs, clothing or household items such as carpets.

## Signs and Symptoms?

- Rash that may have a ring shape with a raised edge.
- It can have scaly patches that are quite itchy and flaky. They can happen on the scalp, body, groin or feet.
- When the scalp is infected, there is often an area of baldness.
- Fungal infections on the feet are also known as "athlete's foot". They are usually very itchy and cause skin cracking between the toes.

## How does it spread?

- The fungus sticks to the fingers or gets under fingernails when someone with ringworm touches or scratches the rash.
- Fungi grow in moist, warm areas, such as locker rooms and swimming pools, then spreads when a person touches someone else or through contact with infected items like combs, unwashed clothing or shower and pool surfaces.
- It's also possible to become infected from contact with animals, like cats and dogs.

## How to decrease the spread?

Because the fungus organisms are very common and contagious, it is difficult to prevent the spread of ringworm.

Steps to help prevent infection include the following:

- Do not share clothing, hats, towels, hairbrushes or other personal items with others.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of ringworm and how it is spread.



- Regularly clean and disinfect common use areas especially in schools, daycare centres, gyms and locker rooms (e.g., sleeping mats, gym mats, shower stalls, benches and floors).
- Use a disinfectant that is labelled to kill fungi and follow the instructions carefully.

Infected persons should follow these steps to keep the infection from spreading:

- Avoid close contact with others until infection has been treated.
- Complete treatment as instructed by a physician, even if symptoms have disappeared.
- Do not share clothing, hats, towels, hairbrushes or other personal items with others.
- Make sure the person and/or animal that was the source of infection gets treated.

## Recommended absence:

While under treatment, infected children should be excluded from gyms, swimming pools and activities that may lead to exposure of others.

Ringworm is **not** reportable to the Medical Officer of Health.

## Resources:

About Kids Health

[www.aboutkidshealth.ca](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca)

Caring for Kids

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

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