

RINGWORM FACT SHEET

What is ringworm?

Ringworm is an infection of the skin, hair or nails caused by a fungus. The rash that it causes usually is ring-shaped but it is not caused by a worm. Ringworm of this type is more common in children than in adults. This fungal infection can also cause athlete's foot (ringworm of the feet) and jock itch (ringworm of the groin and upper thighs).

What are the symptoms of ringworm?

- Ringworm of the scalp and hair: red, scaly patches on the scalp that may be blister-like; brittle hair that break off easily; beard hair may have flakes looking like dandruff; symptoms appear 10-14 days after contact with the fungus.
- Ringworm of the skin: itchy ring-shaped patches that have edges that are red and blistery-looking; symptoms appear four to 10 days after contact with the fungus.
- Ringworm of the feet (athlete's foot): cracked, blistered, peeling areas between the toes, scaling over the sole of the foot; affect adults more than children, males more than females; common among schoolchildren, athletes and military personnel who share shower or bathing; incubation period before symptoms appear is unknown.
- Ringworm of the groin and upper thighs (jock itch): ring-shaped lesions with raised edge around it; very itchy lesions; may ooze clear fluid; males affected more than females; symptoms may appear from four to 10 days after contact with the fungus.

How is ringworm treated?

Consult with your health care provider for recommended treatment. Your health care provider may recommend prescription medication, over the counter topical applications or both.

How is ringworm spread?

Ringworm is spread by direct contact with the skin of the infected person or indirectly by coming in contact with contaminated floors, shower stalls, tubs, articles like clothing, hats, hairbrushes, barber clippers, shoes.

How can the spread of ringworm be prevented?

- Exclude infected children from daycare until treatment has started
- Wash towels and clothing with hot water and/or antifungal agent
- Keep common areas such as showers stalls, benches, dressing rooms, clean; use an anti-fungal agent to disinfect floors and benches.
- Do not share clothing, towels, hairbrushes or other personal items
- If you have ringworm, stay away from community pools and gyms until you have had treatment; follow your usual health care provider's instructions regarding treatment.

What should you do if there is a ringworm infection in a child care or school setting?

You should contact your local health department. Your local health department may have information about how long children with ringworm should remain out of school/daycare. Tell your child not to share personal items, such as clothing, hairbrushes and hats, with other people. Encourage frequent handwashing. Take your child to a pediatrician if he or she develops symptoms.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/> or <http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/dermatophytes/index.html>