

Ringworm (Tinea)

What is ringworm? It is a common fungus infection of the skin, scalp, nails, and feet. Symptoms include:

- Skin lesions
 - ring-shaped, raised, and scaly around the border
 - may be pinkish or light-colored
 - may be itchy
- Scalp lesions: pink, swollen patches that can lead to hair loss
- Nails: discolored (white, yellow, or black), thickened, and cracking
- Feet ("athlete's foot"): cracking of skin between toes

How does ringworm spread? It spreads by:

- Touching or scratching the sores on the skin or scalp
- Sharing combs, brushes, hats, towels, clothes, and bedding
- Walking barefoot in showers and pools

When is ringworm contagious?

- As long as the rash or lesions are present. Not contagious after treatment.
- After exposure, it can take four days to two weeks to develop symptoms.

How do I know if my child has ringworm? If you see the symptoms, see your doctor. Ringworm is diagnosed by the symptoms, exam with a special light, cultures, microscopic exam of skin/scalp scrapings.

What should I do if my child has ringworm?

Treatment: Follow the treatment prescribed by your doctor:

- For skin and feet infections: antifungal cream, powder, or lotion.
- For infections of the scalp and nails: oral medication for at least one to two months.
- For feet infections: keep clean and dry.

Should my child stay home? The child can return to school after treatment is started. NotifY your Head Start program.

To limit the spread:

- Check other children, adults, and pets at home and at school. Get medical/veterinary evaluation and treatment if needed.
- For ringworm of the scalp, clean and disinfect combs and brushes.
- For fungal infection of the feet, clean and disinfect showers and baths.
- Keep lesions covered if possible.
- Wash hands after contact with the lesions.
- Do not share combs, brushes, clothes, towels, or bedding. Separate personal clothes and bedding in individual cubbies for each child.