

# Ringworm and Children

Ringworm is a fungus infection of the scalp or skin. Symptoms include a rash that is often itchy and flaky. Ringworm on the scalp may leave a flaky patch of baldness. On other areas of the skin, ringworm causes a reddish, ringlike rash that may itch or burn. The area may be dry and scaly or it may be moist or crusted. The same fungi that infect humans can also infect animals such as dogs and cats, and infections may be acquired from pets as well as from infected children.

Ringworm is spread by direct contact with a person or animal infected with the fungus. It can also be spread indirectly through contact with articles (such as combs or clothing) or surfaces, which have been contaminated with the fungus. A child with ringworm is infectious as long as the fungus remains present in the skin lesion. The fungus is no longer present when the lesion starts to shrink.

If you suspect your child may have ringworm:

- Contact your child's physician for diagnosis. If the physician's concludes your child does have ringworm, contact your child's preschool.
- If the lesion cannot be covered, keep your child home from school until after treatment has begun and the lesion has started to shrink.
- Teach good hand washing technique to your entire family.
- Prohibit sharing of personal items, such as hair care articles, towels, and clothing.
- Dry skin thoroughly after washing.
- Wash bathroom surfaces and toys daily.
- Vacuum carpeted areas and upholstered furniture.

Pets with skin rashes should be evaluated by a veterinarian for evaluation.

If the pet's rash is caused by fungus, children should not be allowed to come in contact with the pet until the rash has been treated and heals and the pet has been bathed.

Source:

Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Public Health Service  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention