

Ringworm



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Communicable Disease Division
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Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have recently been exposed to **ringworm**. Ringworm is a common fungal infection that may affect the body, feet, or scalp. The name comes from the characteristic red ring that may appear on an infected person's skin.

What are the symptoms of ringworm?

Symptoms include red, circular patches with raised edges and a clear center. When ringworm is on the scalp, a patchy area of dandruff-like scaling might appear. Broken hairs or patches of hair loss may or may not occur. When it is on the feet, the skin is scaly and cracked, particularly between the toes.

How is ringworm spread?

By direct contact skin-to-skin contact with the rash from an infected person or by indirect contact by sharing combs, brushes, towels, clothing or bedding. Animals, such as dogs and cats, with ringworm may also spread the fungus to people.

How is ringworm diagnosed and treated?

A healthcare provider will diagnose ringworm based on the appearance of the rash or looking at the rash with a special blue light. Treatment of ringworm of the skin may include antifungal ointments. Over-the-counter antifungal ointments are often effective; ask your pharmacist for assistance. Prescription antifungal skin medications may be needed. Infections of the scalp or nails are treated with medications taken by mouth as a pill. A child may return to childcare or school after medical treatment has begun.

How do you control the spread?

Make sure all infected persons receive appropriate treatment. Keep affected skin covered with a clean, dry dressing or with clothing. Do not permit the sharing of bike helmets, hats, combs, brushes, barrettes, scarves, clothing, bedding, or towels. Take infected pets to a veterinarian to get appropriate treatment. Avoid close contact with infected pets. Wash hands thoroughly after applying fungal ointment and after touching animals. Wash sheets, clothing and pajamas every day while infected.

How do I get more information?

For more information about ringworm, contact your healthcare provider or Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at (253) 798-6410 and press "0".