

## Ringworm

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, ring-like 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 we suspect that a child at school has ringworm, we will:

- Notify the parents and ask them to contact the child's physician for diagnosis.
- *If the lesion cannot be covered*, we may exclude a child with ringworm until after treatment has begun and the lesion has started to shrink.
- Continue to practice good handwashing technique among all children and adults.

At home, you can help by:

- Prohibiting the sharing of personal items, such as hair care articles, towels, and clothing.
- Drying the skin thoroughly after washing.
- Washing bathroom surfaces and toys daily.
- Vacuuming carpeted areas and upholstered furniture.

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