

# FACT SHEET

# Ringworm

## What is ringworm?

Ringworm is a skin disease caused by a fungus. It is called "ringworm" because it can cause a circular rash (shaped like a ring) that is usually red and itchy. Anyone can get ringworm. Ringworm goes by many names. Other names for ringworm are based on its location of the body, for example ringworm on the feet is also called "athlete's foot."

## What are the symptoms?

- Round patches of red, dry skin surrounded by red raised rings, often times with blisters or crusting
- Itching
- Hair loss in the affected area

## How is it spread?

A person may get ringworm by touching an infected "patch" on another person or an animal. It can also be spread by handling personal items of an infected person such as, towels, clothing or combs. Walking barefoot on floors contaminated with fungi can also spread "athlete's foot."

## How is it prevented?

- Do not share personal items such as combs, brushes, hats, scarves, towels, washcloths, socks, shoes, etc.
- Do not walk barefoot in public places like locker rooms or pools.
- Wear shower shoes or sandals in public shower areas.
- Dry your feet, especially between the toes, after bathing or swimming.
- Change your socks and underwear at least once a day.
- Use separate towels and washcloths for each person in the home.
- If you're an athlete involved in close contact sports, shower immediately after playing and keep your equipment clean.

## How is it treated?

Ringworm can be treated with over-the-counter and prescription medications containing antifungals such as miconazole, clotrimazole, terbinafine, or ketoconazole. Ringworm on the skin can usually be treated with non-prescription antifungal creams, lotions, or powders applied to the skin for 2-4 weeks. Severe or persistent infection may require a prescription medication. Wash your hands with soap and water before and after applying the medication. Wash bed linens, washcloths, and towels in hot soapy water after each use.

*This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).*

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