



Ringworm (Tinea)

Tinea, more commonly called ringworm is a skin infection caused by a fungus that lives on the skin, surfaces of items, or household items – like bedding, clothing, or toys. Ringworm can affect any part of the body including the scalp.

Who get this disease?

Anyone can get the disease. It is transmitted through direct contact with the fungus including touching another person or surface containing the fungus. Ringworm can also be transmitted by contact with animals (e.g. cats and dogs).

What are the symptoms?

Ringworm affecting the skin causes a red, circular patch to form. The patch usually has a raised edge. Ringworm between the toes, or more commonly called athlete's foot, causes the skin between the toes to appear cracked and peeling. Ringworm of the scalp can cause redness of the scalp or loss of hair.

Symptoms typically appear between 4-14 days after contact with the fungus.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

A diagnosis of ringworm is made by a healthcare provider based on the clinical features of the skin. The healthcare provider may feel necessary to take a scraping of the skin for a culture.

Ringworm of the skin can be treated with an over-the-counter antifungal cream or lotion. Ringworm of the scalp can only be treated with a prescribed antifungal medication from the child's health care provider.

How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

1. Items frequently touched by children (i.e. toys and surfaces) should be washed or wiped down frequently. This can be done with a diluted bleach solution.
2. Children should not be allowed to walk barefoot
3. Do not allow children to share personal items like brushes or combs.
4. Children should wash their hands with soap and warm water after touching any animals
5. Socks should be changed daily or if they become wet for any reason.
6. While under treatment swimming pools should be avoided.

Who should be excluded?

The child's parent or guardian should be telephoned/emailed or a note sent home at the end of the school day stating that the child needs to be seen by his/her health care provider related to the potential for infection.

The child should be excluded until treatment is started.

Reportable?

No, ringworm is not reportable by New Hampshire law. However, the Bureau of Infectious Disease Control professionals are available for consultation at (603) 271-4496.