

# Ringworm (Tinea) Fact Sheet

## **Ringworm is an infection of the skin, hair, or nails caused by a fungus**

It gets its name from its appearance on the skin, because the rash is often ring-shaped.

Other names for ringworm include tinea, dermatophytosis, athlete's foot (ringworm of the feet), and jock itch (ringworm of the groin). Despite the name, ringworm is not caused by a worm.

## **You can get ringworm from people, animals, or places such as:**

- Touching a person who has ringworm.
- Using items such as clothes, towels, or hairbrushes that were used by someone with a ringworm infection.
- Coming into contact with the hair or dander of an infected animal.
- Using common areas like gyms, shower stalls, and floors if used by someone with ringworm.

## **Ringworm is easily diagnosed and treated**

A doctor can do simple tests to determine whether a rash is ringworm. Treatment is usually an antifungal cream applied to the site of infection or antifungal pills taken by mouth.

## **If you have ringworm, you can avoid spreading it to others**

- Follow your doctor's advice for proper treatment.
- Keep your skin, hair, and nails clean and dry.
- Do not share towels, clothing, or hairbrushes.
- Wash towels and clothing in hot water and soap to destroy the fungus.
- If you have athlete's foot stay away from common areas such as community pools and gyms until your infection goes away.

## **Ringworm can be prevented**

- Keep common-use areas clean.
- Use a floor and bath cleaner that contains a fungus-killing (called "fungicidal") agent.
- Avoid physical contact with a person or animal that has ringworm.
- Do not share clothing, towels, hairbrushes, or other personal items.