

Ringworm on the Scalp

A short practical guide to care for ringworm



This short practical guide aims to help you understand ringworm in order to provide better treatment for it.

What is ringworm?

Ringworm is a contagious disease caused by a fungus that invades the scalp and hair. It causes itching, dandruff (dry skin) and localized hair loss. It mainly affects children from two to ten years old.

In North America, ringworm is most commonly caused by the *Trichophyton tonsurans* fungus. With immigration from various continents, we now see other species of fungi.

How do you catch ringworm?

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The fungi are transmitted through contact with an infected person or with contaminated objects such as combs, hairbrushes, hats, pillowcases or hairdressers' scissors, razors and hair clippers.

Less commonly, kittens, puppies or other pets or farm animals may transmit a fungus causing ringworm to your child.

How is the fungus treated?

Your doctor will first analyze the child's hair and dandruff to determine the type of fungus present. The test results may take several weeks.

Your doctor will prescribe an oral medication, which will be adjusted if necessary. The usual treatment duration is six to eight weeks.

To reduce transmission, it is recommended that the child and all other family members also use an anti-fungal shampoo (ketoconazole or ciclopirox) twice a week while taking the medication. This shampoo is available at the pharmacy.

Teenagers and adults rarely have ringworm. They can, however, develop a fungus on their skin. If you or someone around you has abnormal skin, talk to your doctor about it.

4 How is transmission to other people prevented?

- ▶ Make sure your child does not share hairbrushes, combs, hats or other items that have been in contact with infected hair.
- ▶ Regularly wash and sanitize with diluted bleach any items that have been in contact with infected human or animal hair.
- ▶ Regularly wash sheets and towels.
- ▶ Encourage your child to wash their hands and body well.
- ▶ Have a veterinarian examine your furry pets, such as dogs and cats. They may carry the fungus but have no symptoms.

Bleach – instructions for use

- › Dilute 80 ml (1/3 cup) of bleach in 1 L (4 cups) of water.
- › Place items that have been in contact with infected hair in this solution.
- › Leave for 10 minutes.
- › Rinse and dry.

Will the hair grow back?

The hair grows back completely in most children when the treatment by mouth is followed carefully.

Severe forms of ringworm, such as those with large pimples or many yellowish scabs, may cause scarring, and the hair may not grow back in those areas.

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Can my child go to school with ringworm?

Your child can return to daycare or school as soon as treatment starts. Remind them not to share personal items (combs, brushes, hair accessories, hats, helmets) with friends.

It is important to inform the daycare or school that your child is being treated for ringworm, as people who have been in contact with your child must be notified and examined frequently.

If other people around your child experience an itchy scalp, dandruff (dry skin) and/or hair loss, they should consult a doctor.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to talk to your doctor or nurse.

For more information

www.Healthline.com

British Association of Dermatologists
www.bad.org.uk

Notes

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