

Ringworm

Symptoms: Ringworm is a fungal infection of the body, scalp, or feet. The scalp infection is most common in children, whereas infection of the feet is more common in adolescents and adults.

Body - Appears as flat, spreading, ring-shaped areas on the skin (lesions). The edge of the lesion may be dry and scaly or moist and crusted. As the lesion spreads outward, the center often becomes clear

Scalp - May be hard to detect in the early stages. It often begins as a small scaly patch on the scalp and may progress to larger areas of scaling. Mild redness, swelling, itching, and pustules (pus-filled) bumps may occur. Infected hairs become brittle and break off easily.

Feet - (Also called athlete's foot.) Scaling or cracking of the skin, especially between the toes, or blisters containing thin, watery fluid may be seen. Itching is common. Serious problems can include bacterial skin infection (cellulitis) and fungal infections of the toenails.

Spread: May occur by touching the lesions of infected persons or pets (usually dogs and cats); by sharing objects that touched the lesions of an infected person, (e.g., hats, caps, combs, brushes, towels, pillows, bedding, sofas, clothing, hair ribbons, barrettes); or have contact with skin scales containing fungi on shower stalls or floors, swimming pool decks, and locker room benches or floors.

Incubation Period

- *Body* - 4 to 10 days after exposure for symptoms to appear. *Scalp* - 10 to 14 days. *Feet* - Unknown

Contagious Period: Contagious as long as lesions are present. Contagiousness is reduced once treatment has begun.

Exclusion from School: Until treatment has been started or if the lesion cannot be covered. If on the scalp, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.

Treatment

- *Body* - Antifungal ointments are used on skin lesions for 4 weeks
- *Scalp* - Medications should be taken by mouth (oral) for 4 to 8 weeks. Antifungal shampoos may also be prescribed
- *Foot* - Antifungal ointments for 1 to 4 weeks. Oral medications may need to be taken for 6 to 8 weeks for severe or recurring problems.

Thank you,

School Nurse