



# PUBLIC FACT SHEET

## RINGWORM

### What is ringworm?

Ringworm is an infection of the skin caused by a fungus. It can affect the skin, scalp, groin area, feet or other areas of the body.

### How is ringworm spread?

Ringworm may be spread through the following ways:

- Direct skin to skin contact with an infected person.
- Contact with towels, clothing, brushes, shower floors, etc. that are contaminated with the fungus.
- Contact with infected dogs, cats, horses, cattle and birds.

### What are possible symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Itchy, red, raised, scaly patches that may blister and ooze. The patches are often redder around the outside, creating the appearance of a ring.
- When your scalp or beard is infected, you may have bald patches.
- Infected nails may become discolored, thick and may crumble.

### How is ringworm diagnosed?

A doctor can diagnose ringworm based on the appearance of the skin. They may also take a scraping of the skin.

### What is the treatment for ringworm?

- Keep skin clean and dry.
- Apply anti-fungal cream, lotion or powder, such as Tinactin or Micatin.
- Wash sheets and nightclothes every day while infected.
- Large areas may need to be treated by a physician.
- Infected pets should also be treated.
- It is not necessary to keep children out of school while undergoing treatment for ringworm. If the ringworm is on exposed skin, it should be kept covered.

### For more information on ringworm:

Ottawa County Health Department

[www.miOttawa.org](http://www.miOttawa.org)

Medline Plus/National Institutes of Health

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001439.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001439.htm)