






# Zoonosis fact sheet: Ringworm

**What is a fungus?**

- Fungi are simple organisms that include mushrooms and mould.
- They are partly like plants, and partly like animals.
- Ringworm fungi are so small they can only be seen with a microscope.

<p><b>What is Ringworm?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ringworm is a fungal infection of the skin. It is <u>not</u> a worm.</li> <li>• It is called ringworm because it causes a 'ring' or circle of hair loss or reddening on skin.</li> <li>• Ringworm fungi are in the environment all the time, especially in warm and humid areas.</li> <li>• There are lots of different types of fungi that cause ringworm; some are from animals, some are from people and some are from the environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How do animals and people get ringworm?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ringworm is spread by touch.</li> <li>• This can happen when you touch an area of skin that is infected with ringworm on an animal or a person.</li> <li>• You can also get ringworm from touching ringworm fungi that are in the soil, or on an object, including hair that has been shed from an infected animal.</li> <li>• Dogs, cats and other animals can also get and spread ringworm.</li> <li>• Strong immune systems usually protect people and animals from getting ringworm infections. Elderly people, children, sick people and pregnant women are more likely to catch ringworm because their immune systems are weaker.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What does ringworm do to animals and people?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ringworm infects the skin and makes hair fall out.</li> <li>• In dogs and cats it causes single or multiple circle shaped bald patches.</li> <li>• In people ringworm causes single or multiple red circle shaped rashes.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Image 1</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Image 2</p>  </div> </div>
<p><b>How do you treat ringworm?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash affected dogs or cats with antifungal shampoos like Malaseb or Imaverol twice a week for 4-6 weeks.</li> <li>• Also wash any other household pets once.</li> <li>• See the vet for antifungal tablets and/or creams.</li> <li>• Wash all animal beds and floors in ten parts of water mixed with one part of bleach. Put animal beds in the sun regularly.</li> <li>• Vacuum or steam clean floors and carpets regularly.</li> <li>• Wash hands after touching an animal or person with ringworm, to stop the spread of ringworm.</li> <li>• People who get ringworm need to see a doctor for treatment.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Image 3</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Image 4</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Image 5</p>  </div> </div>

Source: last updated by Dr. Julie Ward, 2019, see references on next page.

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## References:

Jackson, H., and Marcella, R., 2012, BSAVA Canine And Feline Dermatology 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, British Small Animal Veterinary Association.

Phelan, S., 2010, Dog Health Programs in Indigenous Communities – an Environmental Health Practitioner’s Guide, AMRRIC, <https://www.amrric.org/resources/view/96>

Image 1. Ringworm fungus on a dog, photo courtesy of Dr Rebecca Burrie, Roper Gulf Regional Council.

Image 2. Ringworm fungus on a person, photo courtesy of AMRRIC.

Image 3. Washing a dog, photo sourced from Air Force Medical Service, <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2000178227/> , accessed 12/2/2019.

Image 4. Mop and bucket, photo sourced from Wikimedia, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/Janitor%27s\\_bucket\\_with\\_mop.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/Janitor%27s_bucket_with_mop.jpg) accessed 12/2/2019.

Image 5. Washing hands, photo sourced from Military Health System, <https://health.mil/News/Articles/2017/12/15/Four-tips-for-staying-healthy-this-holiday-season?page=18#pagingAnchor> , accessed 12/2/2019.