

RINGWORM

KEEPING YOUR PETS & FAMILY SAFE

What is Ringworm?

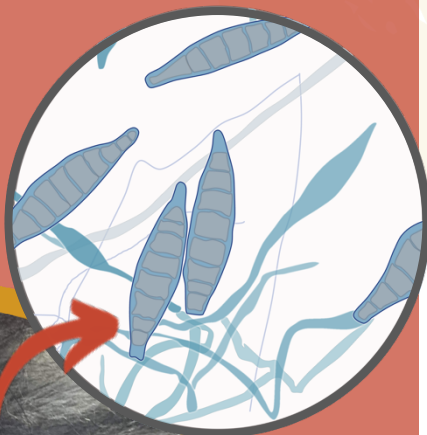
Ringworm is a skin problem caused by a type of fungus called a dermatophyte, that lives on the skin, hair, and nails. Ringworm can also be called “tinea” or “dermatophytosis”.

The name “ringworm” is a bit confusing because it is not caused by a worm at all. The name comes from the fact that in people, the fungus causes a ring of itchy, red skin that can look a bit like a worm.

There are many different types of fungi that can cause ringworm. Some of them can spread between animals and people. People usually get ringworm from other people. But in some cases, especially in young children, people get ringworm from their dog or their cat.

Most of the ringworm we see in cats and dogs can also cause skin problems in people and other animals. So, it's always important to be careful around cats and dogs with skin problems that could be caused by ringworm.

What ringworm looks like under a microscope.



Ringworm Sore



Ringworm is a zoonotic disease meaning it can spread between people and animals.

Most of the ringworm we see in cats and dogs can also cause skin problems in people. Ringworm is very contagious, so it is always best to be on the safe side and take precautions with any animal that is showing symptoms of ringworm infection.



What Does Ringworm Look Like?

Some animals may be infected with ringworm and not show any symptoms at all. Puppies and kittens are more likely to have signs of ringworm than adult animals.

Ringworm sores in cats and dogs have a “ring” shape. In animals, ringworm usually looks like a dry, scaly, greyish, or pink patch on the skin. These patches may be circular, or they can have an irregularly shape. The patches are often hairless or there may be very thin, broken hairs in the middle. Ringworm sores are sometimes itchy and can cause the cat or dog to scratch.

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Common Sites for Ringworm



Photo courtesy of Animals Fiji

Signs of Ringworm in cats & Dogs

- Dry, scaly patches of skin
- circular or irregular in shape
- Grey or pink in colour
- Hairless or with thin, broken hairs in the middle
- May be itchy

How Does My Pet Get Ringworm?

Ringworm is very contagious. When a cat or dog gets ringworm, the fungus makes thousands of tiny "spores" that can infect other animals or people. One of the worst things about ringworm is that these spores can fall off in the environment and can live for years in the soil. So, ringworm can be found almost anywhere.

A dog or cat get sick with ringworm simply by touching another animal that has ringworm or by touching a surface or object that is contaminated with ringworm. Dogs and cats are more likely to get ringworm if they have broken skin from skin disease, cuts, or scratches. Puppies and kittens are also more likely to get ringworm.

What to Do if Your Pet Has Ringworm

Ringworm is treated with special medicine from a vet. Even though ringworm can sometimes go away on its own, it's better to get your pet treated by a vet because cats and dogs with ringworm can infect people and other animals. If you think your dog or cat has ringworm, talk to your vet service provider.

Even with the right medicine, it can take a several weeks before your pet stops being contagious. Below are some tips to help make sure that your pet gets the treatment they need while keeping your family safe.

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Tips For Keeping Your Family Safe

- 1 Take your pet to the vet to get the right medicine.
- 2 If one of your pets has ringworm, get all of the pets in your house checked by a vet.
- 3 Dogs and cats with ringworm should be kept in a one area of the house or yard. This area should be easy to clean.
- 4 While your pet is taking its medicine, your pet should be handled as little as possible.
- 5 Wear a long-sleeved shirt and disposable gloves when handling any animal with signs of ringworm.
- 6 Change your clothes immediately after touching or giving medicine to a sick dog or cat. Wash the dirty clothing as soon as possible in hot water.
- 7 Clean and disinfect your house to remove pet hair that may have ringworm on it.



cleaning Your Home

If your cat or dog has ringworm, it is really important to clean your house properly to stop ringworm from spreading to you, your family, or your other pets.

If you can get them – use disposable gloves to protect yourself while you are cleaning.

Step 1: clean Laundry

Wash any towels, blankets, bedding or clothing your pet has been in contact with. Use hot water and laundry soap. Wash these items separately from the rest of your laundry.



Step 2: clean Pet Bowls

Wash dog and cat bowls in hot, soapy water. Any pet items that cannot be properly cleaned should be tossed in the bin.



Step 3: Remove Pet Hair

Remove pet hair from all of the surfaces in your home using a broom and/or a vacuum to remove visible dirt and pet hair.



Step 4: clean & Disinfect

Wipe down all of the surfaces in your home to remove any remaining dust, dirt, and pet hair. Once everything is clean and dry use a disinfectant (like bleach) to disinfect hard surfaces. Follow the instructions on the bottle.



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Protecting Your Pets from Ringworm

Your pet can get ringworm almost anywhere. Dogs and cats can even get ringworm from the environment, without ever even touching another animal.

There is no vaccine to stop cats and dogs from getting ringworm and medicines that protect your pet against other parasites won't kill ringworm. This makes it hard to prevent ringworm.

But there are a few things you can do to lower the risk:

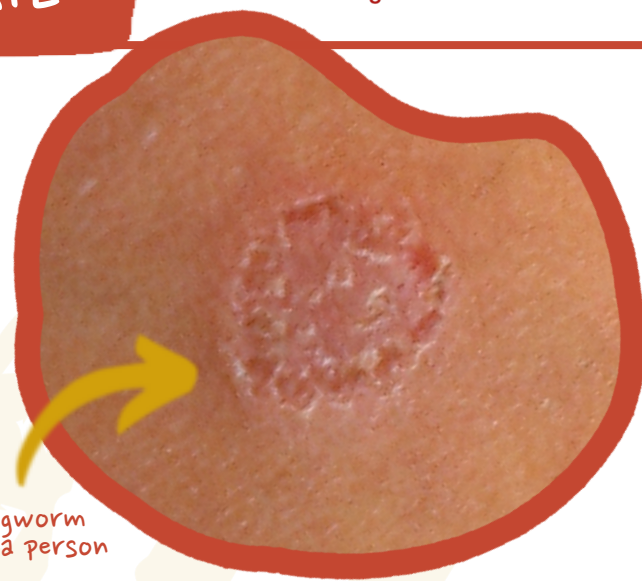
- Take your pet to the vet if they are sick or have skin problems.
- Give your pet regular parasite treatment to protect against other parasites that can damage the skin.
- Keep your pet's sleeping area clean and tidy and washing their bedding regularly.
- If your worried you pet may have ringworm, talk to your vet.

Can Ringworm Make People Sick?

Some types of ringworm cause skin problems in people. People usually get ringworm from other people. But people can also get ringworm from animals, including cats, dogs, horses, and pigs.

People get ringworm the same way animals get ringworm: by touching another person or animal that has ringworm or by touching a surface or object that has spores from the fungus on it. These spores are really small and can't be seen. Anyone can get ringworm, but children and people who have a weak immune system have a higher risk.

Like animals, ringworm in people usually causes skin problems. Ringworm can affect the skin almost anywhere on the body. It can also affect the toenails and fingernails.



Ringworm on a person

Ringworm usually causes a ring-shaped red rash that is usually, scaly, and itchy. On the head or in the beard, ringworm can also cause hair loss. Ringworm in people is itchy and can cause scratching. People with ringworm also have a higher risk of other infections that enter the body through breaks in the skin caused by scratching.

More Information

Want to learn more about ringworm? AMRRIC has some other great resources on ringworm on our website. Scan the QR code to see more of our ringworm resources.



References

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