



For more information about **Ringworm** contact:

*The Community Infection Control Nurse at your  
local Primary Care Trust (PCT)*

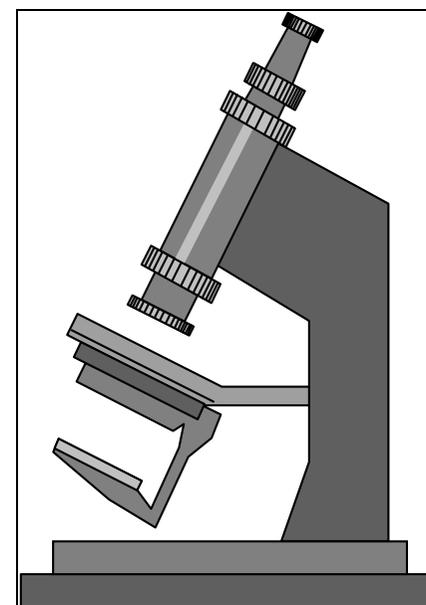
*or*

*your local Health Protection Unit*

*or*

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics/index.htm>

# HPA North West



# Ringworm

INFORMATION LEAFLET

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/northwest/factsheets/RINGWORM.pdf>

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## What is Ringworm?

Ringworm is an infection caused by a microscopic fungus, similar to the fungus which causes athlete's foot. Ringworm may occur on the scalp (tinea capitis) or elsewhere on the skin (tinea corporis).

On the scalp it causes a small circular bald patch with broken hairs at the edges.

On the skin it causes a reddish ring-shaped area with healthy looking skin in the centre.

## Is it a worm?

**NO.** Ringworm gets its name because it produces a ring-shaped mark which gradually gets bigger. It has nothing to do with worms.

## How is it caught?

From infected animals or people. The fungus can survive on furniture, clothes, hairbrushes, towels, etc. so it is not always necessary to have direct close contact with an infected person.

## Can it be treated?

**YES.** There are several creams which are very effective against ringworm of the skin. These are available from your pharmacist or your family doctor can prescribe these. It is important to continue treatment until the skin is completely clear.

For scalp ringworm, a course of tablets or medicine is usually needed. These may have to be taken for several months. Using a cream at the same time may help to stop the infection spreading to other people. Once treated the hair will grow back normally.

## Is it infectious?

If left untreated some ringworm infections may be passed to other people. Skin ringworm stops being infectious soon after treatment is commenced.

No one knows for how long scalp ringworm is infectious, but if cream is used as well as tablets, spread to other people is extremely unlikely.

## Can my child attend nursery/school?

**YES** - once treatment has been commenced.

## Can it be prevented?

Since it is not always clear where ringworm comes from, it can be difficult to avoid infection.

It is important that anyone with the infection is treated to prevent spread. Other people in the same household or close friends should be checked for infection.

Pets or other animals should also be checked and, if infected, must be treated. A vet can advise about this.

## REMEMBER

- Treatment should be started as soon as possible.
- It should continue until cured.
- Infected people should not share towels, flannels or hairbrushes.
- Other people in the house or close friends may be infected.
- Infected pets should be treated.
- It is possible to catch ringworm more than once.