



Programs for Parents, Inc.
Comprehensive Services for Families & Children

YOUR MONTHLY HEALTH TIP FROM PFP

RINGWORM

Ringworm is a fungal infection that can affect the **body, scalp and feet**. The infection develops on the top layer of the skin and is characterized by an **itchy, red circular rash** with **clear, healthy looking skin in the middle**. Ringworm gets its name from the characteristic ring that can appear on the skin, but it has nothing to do with an actual worm under your skin.

Ringworm is contagious and can be spread by:

- ◆ Direct skin to skin contact with an infected person
- ◆ From animal to human contact by touching an animal with ringworm, such as dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, goats, pigs and horses
- ◆ From contact with objects or surfaces that an infected person or animal has recently touched or rubbed against, such as clothing, towels, bedding, combs or **brushes**

The **incubation** and **contagious** period for ringworm is unknown. Control measures are important and should include:

- ◆ Early diagnosis and treatment of an infected child
- ◆ Make sure that children who have been diagnosed with ringworm do not share combs, hairbrushes, hair ribbons, bike helmets, hats, dress-ups or towels and bedding

Treatment for ringworm usually includes a **topical medication in the form of a cream, lotion, or ointment**. Oral medication may be prescribed if the antifungal creams are not effective. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that “**ringworm is not contagious after 48 hours of treatment with an antifungal cream**”. It is important that staff members observe the infected area daily during treatment for **signs of healing** such as:

- ◆ Circular rash is getting smaller and less red
- ◆ Child is not scratching the ringworm rash area
- ◆ There are no signs of the rash spreading to other areas of the child’s body

Good infection control measures should be observed, such as **hand washing** to avoid the **spread of infection, and cleaning shared areas such as tables, chairs and toys with disinfectant solutions such as water and bleach**. Ringworm can take weeks to months to heal, so it is important to be consistent with infection control measures and daily checks of the child for the spread of infection. Encourage parents to finish all of the prescribed medication even if the infected area appears clear of the ringworm rash.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Ringworm please call the Warmline at 1-800-713-9006 and press the *star key to speak with a pediatric nurse.

