

A public information leaflet about:

Ringworm

Some advice about recognising and dealing with this itchy skin infection caused by a fungus

(Norfolk Health Protection Unit working with the Norfolk Public Health Network
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Introduction

Don't worry, ringworm is a relatively harmless skin infection, caused by a fungus.

But it can be passed from person to person unless certain precautions are taken.

The fungus can get into the skin and form patches of blisters (sometimes in the shape of a ring - hence the name), which are very itchy and irritating.

People of all ages can develop this condition, and any area of skin can be affected - including the scalp.

How do you know if you have ringworm?

Itchy patches appear on the skin, which spread to form a ring-shaped blemish - usually the outer edges are red and the inside of the ring is either dry and scaly or moist and blistering.

If you have seen ringworm before, it is not difficult to recognise. In any case, it is best to check with your local doctor or nurse, so that treatment can begin.

How is ringworm caught?

The fungus, which causes ringworm, can be passed from an infected person (or animal), to another person, either *directly* by skin-to-skin contact - or *indirectly* via surfaces infected by fungus particles shed from infected skin.

This fungal infection can also be passed around on items such as hairbrushes, combs, flannels, towels etc.

How is ringworm treated?

Treatment is not usually a big problem and your doctor can prescribe a skin preparation, which will safely destroy the fungus.

It is important to strictly follow the instructions given with the treatment - and to continue with the treatment for as long as it has been prescribed.

How can you avoid spread?

If someone in your household has ringworm, they should not share their personal possessions such as clothes and hygiene equipment (hairbrushes, combs, towels, flannels etc).

It is also important that special efforts are made to clean areas, which are likely to spread infection. These include bathtubs, showers and basins etc.

Bleach based products are effective in destroying this fungus - but these should be handled and stored with care, as usual.

G645n Infection Control Guidance – Ringworm

Clothes should be washed normally in a cycle as hot as the fabric can withstand.

Any animals with suspected ringworm, in contact with the household, should receive veterinary treatment

Is it necessary to be off school or work?

Once medical advice has been taken, and treatment has been started, it is not usually necessary for people to be excluded from school or work.

For further information and assistance contact:-

Your local surgery

Or

Telephone NHS Direct on 0845 4647