

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

RINGWORM

What is Ringworm?

Ringworm is a fungus that affects different parts of the body, scalp, nails, and feet (called Athlete's Foot). Ringworm of the scalp is most commonly found in children. It is mildly infectious as long as the lesions are not treated.

What are the signs and symptoms of a Ringworm infection?

A small, circular sore develops on the scalp and spreads leaving scaly patches or temporary baldness. Circular patches may develop on hairless body parts. Athlete's Foot is characterized by itchy, scaly, soggy skin between the toes. Swelling and/or open sores may develop around the toes. If the nail is diseased, it may be humped, cracked, broken, and appear dark and dirty.

How are Ringworm infections spread?

Ringworm is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact or indirectly from furniture, hair equipment, toilet articles, clothing, and even pets. Shower stalls, floors, standing water and soil harbor the fungus.

What is the incubation period of Ringworm and how long is it contagious?

The incubation period for all types of fungus is unknown.. A child with ringworm is infectious as long as the fungus remains present in the skin lesion. The fungus is no longer present when the lesion starts to shrink. Once a child begins treatment with oral medication, the child is no longer considered infectious.

What should I do if I think I have a Ringworm infection?

Early treatment by a physician is necessary, as is examination of siblings and other household contacts for evidence of infection. Children receiving treatment may attend school. Drastic responses, such as haircuts, shaving of the head or wearing a cap during treatment are unnecessary.

How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Ringworm infection?

Avoiding direct skin contact with infected persons or animals can prevent ringworm. Do not permit sharing of bike helmets, hats, combs, brushes, barrettes, scarves, clothing, bedding or towels. Athlete's Foot can be prevented by wearing shoes that are not too tight, cleaning feet daily, wearing clean, dry socks, keeping shoes and feet dry, and wearing shower shoes when using public showers.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County, Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orcd.com/generalHealth/epidemiology/index.asp>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/dermatophytes/>, or the Orange County School Health website at <http://orcd.com/personalHealth/schoolHealth/index.asp> for additional information.

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