

# RINGWORM



Ringworm is a fungal infection causing a red or silver ring-like rash on your skin. The rash usually affects your arms and legs, but it can be anywhere on your body, including your scalp. The rash is paler in the middle and has a clear, swollen and scaly outside edge. Over time, the rash spreads outwards and the circle looks as if it's growing. Sometimes, you may have more than one circular rash.

Ringworm can affect anyone, but children are more likely to get it than adults. Ringworm has nothing to do with worms.

You can catch ringworm by touching:

- a person with ringworm
- towels, clothes, sheets or other items that a person with ringworm has touched
- soil that has the ringworm fungus in it
- an animal with ringworm. If you think your pet has ringworm (for example patches of missing fur), take it to a vet.

## How can I treat ringworm?

Use **clotrimazole 1% cream** or **miconazole 2% cream** to stop the fungi growing. Use clotrimazole cream if you're taking a medicine such as warfarin to thin your blood. Ask your pharmacist which treatment would be best for you.

Spread the cream on the rash and the area around it. Use clotrimazole 1% cream 2 to 3 times a day for at least 4 weeks. Use miconazole 2% cream 2 times a day (morning and night). Carry on using miconazole cream for about a week after the rash has gone so that the infection does not come back.

If your skin is very red and itchy, your pharmacist may give you some **hydrocortisone 1% cream** to use 1 to 2 times a day together with the clotrimazole or miconazole cream. Spread a thin layer over the rash. Use the hydrocortisone only once a day if you are using it on your groin. Don't use hydrocortisone 1% cream for longer than 7 days, and don't use it on its own or your skin may not heal.

## What else can help?

- Wash your affected skin every day. Dry your skin carefully afterwards, and keep it dry. Clean your bath or shower after washing.
- Wash your clothes and bed linen regularly.

- Wash your towels regularly and don't share towels.
- Try not to scratch your rash – you might spread the infection to other areas of skin.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes made of cotton or a material designed to move moisture away from your skin.

## Do I need to see my doctor?

See your doctor if:

- you have ringworm on your scalp.
- you have a weakened immune system from cancer therapy, steroid therapy or other medicines or conditions.
- you have diabetes that is not well controlled and you haven't seen your doctor in the last 3 months.
- you've treated your rash for 2 weeks but it hasn't got better, or it's getting worse. This might mean that you also have a bacterial infection.
- your rash keeps coming back.

## Can I give ringworm to other people?

Yes, you can pass on the fungus causing ringworm to other people by touching them, or by sharing towels, sheets, clothes and other items with them.

Once you've started treatment for ringworm, you don't need to stay away from school or work.

## Where can I find further information?

Patient UK: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

NHS Direct Wales: [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

NHS Direct Wales Tel: 0845 4647 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Calls from landlines and mobiles cost 2p per minute, in addition to telephone providers access charge.