

Dermatophyosis

Dematomyosis tinea (Ringworm)

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Ringworm

- > Ringworm is a contagious fungus infection that can affect the scalp, the body, the feet (athlete's foot), or the nails
- > The fungi that causes ringworm of the scalp lives in humans and animals
- > The fungi that causes ringworm of the body lives in humans, animals and soil
- > The fungi that causes ringworm of the foot and nails live only in humans
- > The name ringworm comes from the characteristic red ring that can appear on an infected person's skin

Clinical features

Scalp

- > Begins as a small pimple that becomes larger, leaving scaly patches of temporary baldness
- > Infected hairs may become brittle and break off easily

Body

- > Flat, round patch anywhere on the skin except the for the scalp and feet
- > The groin is a common area of infection
- > As the rash gradually expands, its centre clears to produce a ring
- > May be itchy

Feet

- > Appears as scaling or cracking of the skin, especially between the toes

Nails

- > The nails become thicker, discoloured and brittle, or become chalky and disintegrate

Diagnosis

- > Microscopic examination of scrapings taken from skin lesions
- > Examination of scalp lesions under ultraviolet light

Mode of transmission

- > Direct skin to skin contact with an infected person or pet
- > Indirect contact with an object or surface that an infected person or pet has contacted

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Incubation period

- > One to three weeks
- > Varies with the site of infection

Infection precautions

- > Additional precautions
- > Minimize close contact with others until treated
- > Ensure that the person or animal that was the source of infection is treated

Treatment

- > Nail hair and widespread dermatophytosis infections are best treated with antifungal drugs
- > Griseofulvin should be avoided during pregnancy
- > Use topical treatments e.g. clotrimazole (Canesten®)

Reference

1. Ellis D, Watson A. Systemic antifungal agents for cutaneous fungal infections. Australian prescriber [serial online] 1996 [cited 2004 Jun 8]; 19: [5 screens]. Available from URL:
<http://www.australianprescriber.com/magazine/19/3/72/5/>

Other useful web sites

<http://www.health.sa.gov.au/PEHS/Youve-got-what/ygw-fungal-skin-nails.pdf>

Version control and change history

PDS reference: OCE use only

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	19 June 04	21 April 09	Original version
2.0	21 April 09	current	