

# Ringworm

## Community and Public Health

Phone: 03 364 1777

Web: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)

Ringworm (also known as tinea) is an infection caused by a species of fungus which may affect skin or hair. Infections are very common.

Ringworm may appear anywhere on the body. It may be itchy and tends to spread from the centre which clears, leaving a ring-shaped sore.

### What are the symptoms?

**Scalp ringworm** appears as small bald patches with hair loss and some scaling. It can also be wet and crusty. The time between coming into contact with the fungus and sores developing is usually 10 to 14 days.

**Body ringworm** appears as round sores with a red, scaly edge raised above the surrounding skin. The rash can be dry and scaly, or wet and crusty. The time between coming into contact with the fungus and sores developing is usually 4 to 10 days.

### How is it caught or spread?

You can become infected with ringworm through direct or indirect contact with skin sores of infected people or contaminated floors, shower stalls and other items used by infected people or animals.

A person is infectious for as long as the sores are present and the fungus remains on contaminated items.

### How is it treated?

Your Public Health Nurse, pharmacist or doctor may be able to tell you if it is ringworm. Antifungal creams are available to treat the sores—follow the instructions on the packet. Your pharmacist or doctor can also give you advice.

### How is spread prevented?

The following are some things you can do to help stop ringworm spreading:

- Cover the lesions.
- Do not scratch as this may cause added infection and spread.
- Don't share other people's footwear, towels, flannels, combs and hats etc.
- Wash bedding, towels and clothes with hot water and detergent.
- Regularly clean the shower and/or bath with bleach or fungicide.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water.
- Check pets for hairless, circular scaly patches on the skin, especially round the head or neck.
- Seek treatment for infections.



## Staying away from school or preschool

Children may attend school or preschool once they are receiving treatment.

### For further information, contact:

- Your local doctor or practice nurse;
  - Your local Public Health Nurse; or
  - A Health Protection Officer at Community and Public Health.
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### Other resources available on childhood illnesses:

- Conjunctivitis
- Hand, foot and mouth
- Impetigo
- Rotavirus
- Slapped cheek disease
- Threadworms

*Image sourced from SPCA New Zealand website.*

## Community and Public Health: Community Health Information Centres

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