

# Ringworm (Tinea Corporis)

(A common fungal skin infection that causes a ring-shaped rash)

## What Is Ringworm (Tinea Corporis)?

Despite the name, **ringworm is not caused by a worm.**

It is a common **fungal skin infection** caused by dermatophyte fungi that grow in the outer layer of the skin.

“Tinea corporis” refers to ringworm affecting the:

- Arms
- Legs
- Chest
- Back
- Trunk

The infection is common in both children and adults.



## What Does Ringworm Look Like?

Ringworm often appears as:

- A **circular or ring-shaped rash**
- Red, pink, or darker patches
- Raised or scaly border
- Central clearing (“ring” appearance)
- Itching or irritation

Some rashes may have multiple rings or slowly enlarge over time.

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## How Does Ringworm Spread?

Ringworm spreads through:

- Skin-to-skin contact
- Shared towels, clothing, or sports equipment
- Contact with infected pets
- Locker rooms or gym surfaces

It is contagious until properly treated.

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## How Is Ringworm Diagnosed?

A dermatologist can often diagnose ringworm during a skin exam.

Sometimes additional testing may be performed, including:

- Skin scraping
- Microscopic examination
- Fungal culture

This helps confirm diagnosis and rule out eczema, psoriasis, or other rashes.

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## How Is Ringworm Treated?

**Mild cases:**

- Prescription or over-the-counter antifungal creams

**More widespread or stubborn infections:**

- Oral antifungal medication

**Important:**

Steroid creams alone can worsen fungal infections and may make the rash less recognizable.

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# Pre-Op Instructions

*(Before evaluation or treatment)*

- Avoid applying heavy steroid creams unless prescribed
- Keep the area clean and dry
- Avoid scratching the rash
- Tell us if:
  - The rash is spreading quickly
  - Pets at home have skin problems
  - Other household members have similar rashes
  - You recently used steroid creams

Arrive with clean skin and avoid applying ointments right before the appointment if possible.

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# Post-Op Instructions

*(After starting treatment)*

## What's normal

- Gradual improvement over several weeks
- Mild dryness or peeling during healing
- Itching improving before rash fully disappears

## Aftercare

- Use medications exactly as prescribed
- Keep skin dry and clean
- Wash towels, clothing, and bedding regularly
- Avoid sharing personal items
- Continue treatment for the full recommended duration

## Call the office if

- The rash worsens
  - New areas continue appearing
  - Pain, pus, or fever develops
  - No improvement occurs after treatment
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# Ringworm (Tinea Corporis) FAQ

## Can Ringworm Leave Scars?

Most cases heal without scarring.  
Temporary lighter or darker marks may remain briefly after inflammation resolves.

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## Why is it called ringworm if there's no worm?

The name comes from the ring-shaped appearance of the rash.

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## Is ringworm contagious?

Yes. It spreads through direct contact and shared items.

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## Can pets spread ringworm?

Yes. Cats, dogs, and other animals can sometimes transmit fungal infections.

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## Can steroid creams make ringworm worse?

Yes. Steroids can temporarily reduce redness while allowing the fungus to spread more deeply.

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## How long does treatment take?

Many cases improve within a few weeks, but treatment duration varies depending on severity.

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## Can ringworm come back?

Yes. Reinfection can occur from untreated contacts, pets, or contaminated items.

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## Is ringworm dangerous?

Usually no, but untreated infections can spread or become more extensive.