



What is Ringworm?

M. Iqbal, DVM, MS, PhD; Family Pet Hospital, Perry Hall, MD 21128

Ringworm or dermatophytosis is a fungal infection that affects the skin, hair, and/or nails (claws).

What to look for? Symptoms of ringworm in pets include accumulations of surface skin cells, such as seen in dandruff (scales); poor hair coat; reddened skin; darkened skin; itchiness; and hair loss, which may be patchy or circular (ring).

What causes ringworm? Pets most commonly develop ringworm because of infections with the variety of fungi. Environments that are densely populated with animals (for example, in an animal shelter or kennel), or where there is poor nutrition, poor management practices, and lack of adequate quarantine period, will also increase risk of infection. Immunocompromised pets are at greater risk of getting this infection. Pet with skin allergies or dry skin can also get ringworm as a secondary infections. Chronic skin conditions may have ringworm as one of the underlying reasons as well.

How is ringworm diagnosed? Your veterinarian will perform two tests- a backlight test to quickly find out whether your pet is positive or not; fungal culture of hair from the affected sites is definitive test for ringworm. Normally culture takes up to 2 wks to complete.

Can humans get ringworms? Yes. Immunocompromised individual are at greater risk of getting this infection from their contact with such pets or their hair.

How to Treatment ringworm? Your veterinarian will choose anti-fungal medicine- topical and/or oral based on the severity and culture test results. Oral anti-fungal medicine is generally started based on the positive culture

test. While waiting for the fungal culture test we may recommend some topical medicines or shampoo/mousse.

Living & Management. A fungal culture is the only means of truly monitoring your dog's response to treatment. Many animals will improve clinically, but remain positive on fungal culture test. It is advisable to repeat fungal cultures toward the end of treatment, and continue treatment until at least one culture result is negative. In resistant cases, fungal cultures may be repeated on a weekly basis, and treatment continued until two to three consecutive negative results are obtained. Complete blood counts should be performed weekly or biweekly for animals receiving anti-fungous antibiotic.

Prevention. To prevent re-infection from other animals, the use of a quarantine period, and fungal cultures of all animals living in the household are necessary. Treatment of exposed animals should be considered to prevent repeated development of infection. The possibility of rodents aiding in the spread of the disease should be considered. If you suspect that your dog has access to rodents, or that rodents are in your immediate environment, it is highly advised that you take the necessary steps to eliminate the pests. Frequent vacuuming also takes care of infected hair from the environment, hence reducing the risk of infection.

(410) 529-7297 (PAWS)
www.FamilyPetsHospital.com
info@FamilyPetsHospital.com

Partnership in Pet Care = Happy + Healthy + Longer living Pet