



# The Facts about Ringworm (Tinea Capitis)



Photo courtesy of Dennis E. Babak, PhD, Clinical Mycologist

Mild ringworm of the scalp, showing minimal hair loss and dandruff-like flakes



Photo courtesy of Dennis E. Babak, PhD, Clinical Mycologist

Severe ringworm of the scalp showing substantial hair loss



Photo courtesy of Dennis E. Babak, PhD, Clinical Mycologist

Inflammatory ringworm of the scalp with pus-filled sores in an area of hair loss



Photo courtesy of Del J. Dehaer, MD

Ringworm of the scalp with a textured, inflammatory, pus-filled area of hair loss, and swollen lymph nodes in the neck

## What is ringworm?

- Ringworm is a common scalp disease
- Ringworm is caused by a fungus, not a worm
- Anyone can catch ringworm, but it mostly affects children
- Ringworm is very easy to catch
- Ringworm can be spread by sharing things that touch the head or hair, such as pillows, combs, brushes, and hats

## What does ringworm look like?

- You may see flakes in your child's hair that look like dandruff
- You may see scaly places on your child's head
- You may find places where your child has lost hair
- Your child may have a very itchy head
- Sometimes you won't see anything—often, adults have ringworm and don't know it

## What should I do if I think my child has ringworm?

- You should take your child to see a pediatrician or dermatologist for evaluation and treatment
- Make sure your child takes the oral medication prescribed by the doctor to treat ringworm
- You must make sure your child takes the medicine every day until it is gone—ringworm can reappear if the medicine is not taken correctly
- Everyone in your household should be checked for ringworm—remember, you can't always see ringworm

## How can I protect my family from ringworm?

- Do not share anything that touches the head or hair with friends or family
- Do not use pomades or sticky hair products
- Avoid tight braids—these encourage the growth of fungi
- Be sure everyone in your household washes their hands several times a day
- Wash all things that touch the head or hair (like combs, brushes, and sheets) in hot soapy water

**Ringworm can be safely and effectively treated with oral medication**