

Fungal infections of the skin or scalp

(ringworm, tinea)

Tinea is a common fungal infection of the skin that is usually found in moist, warm parts of the body, such as between the toes, but can also infect skin on other parts of the body. The condition looks different depending on where it is. On the head or body, it causes a rash called ringworm. Ringworm is not caused by a worm.

How it spreads

The tinea fungus spreads by direct skin contact with an infected person or animal, or by touching contaminated clothing or soil.

Exclusion period

Exclude until the day after starting antifungal treatment.

Actions for educators and other staff

Follow the exclusion period in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

Ensure staff and children have good hand hygiene.

Ensure staff use appropriate cleaning practices, as described in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

Actions for parents and carers

Take your child to a doctor for diagnosis and treatment. Tinea is usually treated with antifungal cream or ointment, but sometimes oral medications are needed. Keep the affected area clean and dry. Keep your child at home until the day after treatment starts.

Do not share towels, clothing or shoes. Check other people in the family for signs of infection.

Wash your hands thoroughly after applying treatment or touching the affected area. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly.

If pets have ringworm or mange, take them to a vet for treatment.

More information about fungal infections of the skin or scalp

See healthdirect for more information on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of tinea and other fungal skin diseases (healthdirect.gov.au/tinea and healthdirect.gov.au/fungal-skin-diseases).

To find out if a child needs medical help:

- use the online symptom checker (healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker)
- speak to a registered nurse by calling the 24-hour health advice hotline on 1800 022 222.