

Ringworm

Occupational Bacterial Infection from Handling Livestock, Dogs, Cats, and Rodents.

What is dermatophytosis?

Dermatophytosis, more commonly known as ringworm, is a dermatophytic fungal infection that affects the skin or other keratinous tissues. Ringworm can be caused by a number of different fungal organisms, typically *Trichophyton* spp., *Microsporum* spp., and *Epidermophyton* spp. It is found worldwide and infects livestock, horses, rabbits, dogs, cats, and humans.

How does infection occur?

Ringworm infection can occur from direct contact with an infected animal (or human), contaminated bedding, equipment, or other aspects of the environment, and may spread from one area of the body to another.

What are the symptoms?

“Ringworm” gets its name from the red, raised circular lesions with central clearing (ring-shaped). It can take 1 to 2 weeks after exposure for any symptoms to appear. Dermatophytes (ringworm organisms) live on keratinized cells such as hair, nails, and the outer layer of the skin. Red, raised, scaly circular lesions accompanied by itchiness, redness, or scaliness at the exposure site are the most common signs. A secondary bacterial infection may accompany these lesions and may result in open, weeping sores.

How do I prevent it?

Wash your hands after coming into contact with animals and related equipment. Wear PPE such as gloves and a gown if handling an infected animal. Disinfect the environment where animal exposure may occur.

How is it treated?

Dermatophytosis is treated with a topical and/or oral antifungal medication.

Resources used:

- Chapter 28, Selected Zoonoses, (2015) *Lab Animal Medicine*, 3rd ed.
- The Center for Food Security and Public Health Zoonotic Disease Factsheets: Dermatophytosis
- The Center for Food Security and Public Health Zoonotic Transmission Routes: Dermatophytosis