RINGWORM

What is it?

Ringworm is a fungal infection of the skin.

How do I know if someone has it?

It typically appears as flat, spreading, ring shaped patches. The edges are usually reddish and may be dry and crusted or moist and crusted. As each ring spreads, the middle clears leaving more normal looking skin. On the scalp it can cause patches of baldness.

Is it infectious?

Yes, by direct contact with the infected area of skin; indirectly by contact with clothing or items from an infected person or from surfaces in shared areas which may have the fungus in dust. It can also be caught from infected animals.

What is the incubation period?

From 4 to 10 days.

Is there any treatment?

Yes. A doctor will prescribe either a lotion or a course of anti-fungal tablets. The treatment should be continued for two weeks after the patches have healed.

What should I do if someone has the infection?

- Consult your doctor who will confirm the diagnosis and decide about treatment.
- The area should be washed carefully with soap and water and then dried before lotion is applied.
- Do not share the patient’s clothes, towels or sheets as long as the ringworm is present. Wash them in hot water (60C).
- Keep surfaces free of dust, in shared areas, when ringworm is present by regular vacuuming and damp dusting.
- Household members and pets should be checked for signs of infection and treated too.

How soon can someone with the illness return to school or work?

They can return to work or school once treatment has started.