Ringworm

Description

Ringworm is a contagious skin infection caused by a fungus. Although it can affect anyone of any age, it is more common among children.

Ringworm appears as an itchy ring shaped rash which may either be dry and scaly or wet and crusty that thrives in warm, moist areas of the body.

How does it spread?

Ringworm can be passed from one person to another by direct skin-to-skin contact or by contact with contaminated items such as combs, unwashed clothing and bedding. You can also catch ringworm from pets.

Infectious period

Ringworm on the body appears around 4 – 14 days after first contact with the fungus and remains infectious while there is a rash on the skin.

Exclusion period

A child should not attend the centre until:

- They have a confirmed diagnosis from their doctor and are receiving treatment.
- The rash is covered either with bandages or under clothes.

Responsibilities of staff

- Make sure all teachers, children and babies wash and dry their hands thoroughly after nappy change, toileting, before and after eating or handling food and infant formula bottle.
- Children should not share towels, flannels, blankets, clothing or dress-up clothes.
- Wash dress-up clothes in hot water and where possible wash toys in a dishwasher.
- Wash surfaces regularly with a good detergent.
- Make sure there is good air flow through the centre, particularly in sleep rooms.

Responsibilities of parents

- If your child has an unusual skin lesion, take them to your family doctor to get a diagnosis.
- Apply treatment as directed by your family doctor.
- The child with ringworm should use separate towels, flannels and bedding to the rest of the family.

Treatment

- It is important to visit your family doctor for a correct diagnosis of any unexplained skin lesion. Your doctor may make a diagnosis based on the appearance of the lesion or may need to do further testing.
- Antifungal creams can be prescribed by your doctor for the treatment of ringworm. Ringworm should clear within a month of being treated.
- If necessary infected pets should also be treated (consult a vet for appropriate treatment).