

RINGWORM (DERMATOPHYTOSIS)

What is ringworm?

“Ringworm” is the common name for the skin infection caused by a group of fungi, which feed on the dead cells of skin and hair causing redness and irritation. It is NOT a worm as the name suggests- this misconception arose because the round raised lesion in people with the disease looked like a worm.

How is my pet infected?

Infective fungi penetrate the outer skin layer and hair shafts. Trauma to the skin from flea bites and clipping wounds can predispose to it. The fungus is present on broken hairs, collars and brushes from infected animals and infection from contact with these are common. Immuno-compromised animals such as the very old, young or sick are at greater risk. High humidity may also increase the risk of disease.

Where is the infection picked up?

The spores are extremely hardy and can survive in the environment for years. All it takes is skin contact with the spores to cause infection, and infected animals are continually dropping spore-covered hairs. Some animals are carriers and can spread the disease without visible signs of infection themselves.

Can I become infected?

Ringworm is contagious to people, but just as with animals, immuno-compromised people, such as HIV sufferers, people on chemotherapy and highly stressed people are more at risk. In general, if you do not have the disease by the time your pet is diagnosed then you are unlikely to get it.

What are the signs of infection?

The most common signs are broken and brittle hair, partial or patchy hair loss, scales and crusting, swollen or ruptured follicles, and areas of self mutilation.

How is it diagnosed?

Lesion appearance in animals can vary greatly, and some are not even itchy. Some forms of ringworm will glow under an ultra-violet light but many will not. As a result in order to positively diagnose the disease hair and skin samples must be taken and placed on a special culture medium in an attempt to grow the fungi. This process usually takes up to 10-12 days to grow the infectious fungus.

How is the disease treated?

- **Oral medication:** there are primarily two types of oral medications for pets- **griseofulvin** and **itraconazole/ketoconazole**. Both must be given with food (griseofulvin with a fatty meal) and have significant potential to cause birth defects in pregnant animals. Treatment is continued for at least 1-2 months and is only discontinued once repeat cultures for the fungus are negative.
- **Topical treatment:** the aim here is to kill the fungus on the pet so the hairs dropped are no longer infectious, thereby reducing the contamination of the environment
- **Environmental control:** all hard surfaces, bedding, rugs, cages and litter trays should be thoroughly cleaned/disinfected and steam cleaning of carpets will reduce contamination. Infected cats should be restricted to one room until negative to reduce contamination and the remainder of the house can be treated in this period.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONSULT YOUR VET

金錢癬 (Ringworm)

什麼是金錢癬?

金錢癬是一種由真菌感染而引起的皮膚疾病，真菌會穿破皮膚表層及髮絲，導致毛髮脫落、皮膚變紅及痕癢。

我的寵物如何受感染呢?

引致金錢癬的真菌及其孢子在環境中到處都存在，並可生存數年。有些帶菌動物並沒有任何病徵但可到處散播真菌。直接接觸已感染的動物或間接接觸被真菌污染的物件如帶菌動物的毛髮、頸帶、毛刷及床鋪等已可被感染。由跳蚤或其他創傷所造成的傷口，加上高濕度亦增加患上此病的機會。年老、年幼及免疫力較差的動物亦最易受到感染。

我會被感染嗎?

金錢癬是可以傳染給人類及其他動物的。但跟動物一樣，免疫力較差的例如 HIV 帶菌者、正接受化療的病人、孕婦、承受壓力太大的人較易受感染。當閣下在你的寵物被確診時還未有病徵，受感染的機會應該不大。當然每次接觸患金錢癬的動物後應徹底清潔雙手。

病徵

毛髮脆弱及折斷、毛髮脫落、有頭皮屑、毛孔腫漲、因痕癢自舔或自殘。

診斷

金錢癬在不同動物身上看起來可以非常不同，有些甚至不會痕癢。有些金錢癬在紫外光燈下看起來會發光但很多並不會。因此要確診的話，獸醫很多時會取些毛髮樣本作細菌培植，這約需時 2 星期。

治療

- **口服藥物**：2 種最主要的口服藥物是 **Griseofulvin** 及 **Itraconazole/ Ketoconazole**。兩種藥物都應在飯後餵服(Griseofulvin 應與油性食物一同餵食)，而該藥物可能會導致懷孕動物誕下畸胎。療程需維持至少 1-2 個月。在決定終止療程以前，獸醫會再次取些毛髮樣本培植，直至結果為陰性為止。
- **局部性治療**：消毒葯水及葯膏，主要是殺掉受感染毛髮上的真菌，從而減低真菌在環境內散播。
- **環境控制**：地板、床鋪、籠舍、毛巾及砂盤等應徹底清理及消毒。蒸氣清潔地氈可減低真菌在環境內散播。受感染的貓隻應留在一獨立房間內直至完全康復，與此同時應一併徹底清潔家居其餘部分，這樣可有效減低再次受感染的機會。

欲知道更多有關詳情，可請教你的獸醫