

RINGWORM(DERMATOPHYTOSIS) IN DOGS AND CATS

Ringworm (*dermatophytosis* or “gaf gaf,”) is a common and highly contagious fungal skin infection in dogs and cats caused by *Microsporum* and *Trichophyton* species. Despite the name, it is not caused by a worm but by fungi that feed on dead skin and hair cells.

IT'S ZOO NOTIC! → meaning it can be transmitted from animals to humans.

How Do Dogs and Cats Get Ringworm?

Ringworm spreads through direct contact with an infected animal—whether they show symptoms or not—or by touching contaminated objects(e.g. bedding, furniture, or grooming tools).

The most common lesions are:

- Bald, scaly patches with broken hairs
- Acne-like bumps on the skin

The most common areas of the body affected by ringworm are the face, ear tips, tail, and feet.



How Is Ringworm Diagnosed?

Ringworm is diagnosed by fungal culture, examination with an ultraviolet lamp, and/or direct microscopic examination of hair or skin scale. However, given the prevalence of fungal infections here, we often make diagnoses on exam and with response to empirical treatment without diagnostic confirmation.

How is this condition treated?

- **Isolation:** Dogs with ringworm infections must be quarantined. Direct contact with other household pets and people increases the risk of spreading the disease.
- **Bathing:** Bathing is important for removing fungal spores attached to the dog. The bathing options are lime sulfur dips and antifungal shampoos.
- **Topicals:** Antifungal creams and ointments are used directly on the skin to treat ringworm lesions.

Contact Information

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