



## **RINGWORM OF THE SCALP (TINEA CAPITIS)**

This handout was written to answer some of the questions most often asked about ringworm of the scalp. Feel free to ask your nurse or doctor to go over any information that you do not understand.

### **WHAT IS RINGWORM OF THE SCALP (TINEA CAPITIS)?**

Ringworm is not caused by a worm. It is caused by a fungus that infects the hair shaft on the scalp and causes the hairs to break off (ringworm of the face may also be present). It is passed from one infected person to another by the sharing of combs, brushes, hats, barrettes, pillows, towels and the backs of chairs. Ringworm is not dangerous, but left untreated the hair loss and scaling can continue. Hair usually will grow back after treatment, but can take as long as six to 12 months. Ringworm is mildly contagious (spread to others). Once your child has been started on medication and received one washing with the special shampoo, he or she may return to school or day care.

### **HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS RINGWORM OF THE SCALP?**

The signs and symptoms of ringworm of the scalp are:

- Round patches of hair loss that slowly increase in size.
- Scaling (flaking) of the scalp.
- Yellow crusts on scalp.
- Hairs broken close to scalp surface creating dark or blond “dots.”

### **HOW DO YOU TREAT RINGWORM OF THE SCALP?**

Your doctor may treat ringworm of the scalp by:

1. Antifungal medicine (Griseofulvin), taken by mouth.

Your child will need to take this medicine \_\_\_\_ times a day for \_\_\_\_ weeks.

- a. This medicine works best if taken with fatty foods such as milk or ice cream.
- b. Antifungal creams or ointments are not effective in killing the fungus that causes ringworm of the scalp.

2. Your doctor may also prescribe an antifungal shampoo to make your child less contagious and allow your child to return to school. He or she may have the entire family wash with the shampoo in order to keep other family members who are carrying the ringworm on their scalp, (but don't have an active infection) from spreading it.

You will need to make an appointment with your regular doctor in \_\_\_\_ weeks to see if the fungus is gone.

### **WHEN DO I NEED TO CALL THE DOCTOR?**

You will need to call the doctor if:

- The ringworm area has pus or a yellow crust.
- The scalp becomes swollen, moist or soft.
- If the ringworm continues to spread after two weeks of treatment.
- You have any questions or concerns.

*This handout is for general information only and should not be considered complete. For more information about ringworm of the scalp (tinea capitis) and your child, please ask your doctor.*

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Written: 1994  
Revised: 2000  
Reviewed: 2003