

## Tinea (dermatophyte fungal infection)

Tinea is the clinical term for dermatophyte (fungal) infection of the hair, the nails, or the top layer of the skin (epidermis). Tinea corporis is a dermatophyte infection (dermatophytosis) of the face, trunk, and limbs. (Tinea may also occur on the feet, groin, hands, scalp, or beard areas; called tinea pedis, cruris, manuum, capitis, or barbae, respectively.)

Transmission is usually autoinoculation from other parts of the body (most commonly the feet), contact with active lesions of animals or other persons, or from soil.

### Symptoms

Typical lesions begin as flat, scaly spots, then develop a red, raised border which advances outward in all directions (hence the common name “ringworm”). As lesions enlarge they develop a central area of clearing, scaling, and hyperpigmentation (darkening).

### Diagnosis

The clinician may diagnose tinea by appearance, microscopic examination of skin scrapings, or (rarely) culture.

### Treatment

Most cases are treated by application of topical antifungal creams, but extensive or difficult to treat cases may require systemic treatment with oral medication.

### Topical treatment

In general tinea corporis responds well to topical medication. Antifungal cream is applied to the lesion and a 3 centimeter (approximately 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  inch) area beyond the borders of the lesion twice a day for at least 2 weeks. Therapy should continue for one week after lesion(s) resolve(s) to ensure the fungus is completely gone.

### Systemic oral treatment

Multiple, deep, or extensive tinea lesions may require oral antifungal medications. Oral medications are taken daily for 2-6 weeks and result in higher clinical cure rates.

### Prevention

Because dermatophytes prefer warm, moist environments, preventing tinea involves keeping skin dry and avoiding contact with infectious material. Basic prevention measures include:

- Wash hands after handling animals, soil, and plants.
- Avoid touching characteristic lesions on other people.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Cover exercise equipment with a towel to prevent contact with exposed skin.
- Practice good hygiene when participation in sports involves physical contact with other people (e.g. wrestling).

### References

www.aad.org

Wikipedia, search for Tinea corporis

Habif, T.P. (2001) Skin Disease: Diagnosis and Treatment. St. Louis: Mosby.

Fitzpatrick, T.B. (1997) Color Atlas and Synopsis of Dermatology. New York: McGraw-Hill.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>