



Should Patients with Ringworm Be Rehomed?

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Dermatophytosis (ie, ringworm) is caused by a number of skin fungi and can infect humans and animals alike.¹

In General

- ▶ Potential sources of infection include domestic animals, wildlife (eg, rabbits, rodents), and soil.
- ▶ Dogs and cats with dermatophytosis often have well-demarcated hair loss with variable pruritus, erythema, scale, and/or scabs.
- ▶ In humans, lesions often have a classic ring-like appearance of erythema and scale and usually respond to topical administration of antifungal drugs.

Diagnosis

- ▶ Many skin diseases in dogs and cats mimic the appearance of dermatophytosis; fungal culture is recommended to confirm diagnosis.
- ▶ Some dogs and cats may be subclinical carriers of *Microsporum canis*. Carriers can be a source of infection for

other dogs, cats, and/or humans in the home.^{2,3}

- ▶ Possible genetic factors or pre-existing skin disease (eg, allergic dermatitis, immunocompromised state) may make some individuals more susceptible than others to developing dermatophytosis lesions.

Owner Communication

- ▶ A pet with dermatophytosis does not need to be rehomed, but the family physician should be notified, particularly if the household includes children or immunocompromised family members.
- ▶ A systematic, multipronged treatment approach (many drugs are effective) and environmental management plan should be developed.
- ▶ Fungal culture of resident dogs and cats should be conducted to assess for carrier status and to separate infected animals from negative animals.

- ▶ Thorough cleaning of the environment and bedding with soap and water, along with application of appropriate disinfectants, is recommended.
 - Isolation of infected animals to areas with minimal carpeting and upholstery is ideal.
- ▶ Thorough hand washing should be performed after handling infected or carrier animals and contaminated bedding.
- ▶ Immunocompromised individuals should avoid contact with those infected until serial cultures confirm cure. ■

References

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