



## *Rolling Meadows Animal Hospital* *Small Animal News Letter*

**August 2006**

### **RINGWORM**

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“Ringworm” is a skin disease of warm-blooded mammals properly termed “Dermatophytosis.” It can be a major problem in multiple animal households and kennels/catteries. It is caused by a fungus-type organism. It is NOT a “worm”!

The fungus lives in the outer layers of skin, hair shafts, and toe nails. It invades the hair follicles damaging the actual hair itself. The hairs become fragile and break easily. As the infection progresses, more and more hair may be lost.

After appropriate treatment, the hair will grow back (though sometimes discolored). Ringworm may result in secondary bacterial infections of the skin. It is important to initiate treatment early.

Dogs and cats become infected with the fungus by contact with other infected animals, infected people, or contaminated soil.

Diagnosis is made by specific tests including skin scrapings, ultraviolet light observation, fungal cultures, and sometimes biopsy.

Ringworm is contagious to people. In fact, the disease “Athlete’s Foot” is a form of ringworm very common in people.

It is important that we culture suspected cases of ringworm to determine the specific fungus due to the possibility of family members and/or other pets contracting the infection.

#### **Treatment of ringworm can include all or some of the following:**

1. Shampoo with antifungal agents (be sure to shampoo other pets in household as a preventative.
2. Thoroughly wash pet’s bedding and dip in Clorox or Chlorhexadine - 4 oz. mixed in one gallon of water.
3. Give oral medications as directed.
4. Apply ointment/cream to individual skin lesions as directed.

CAUTION: Infected pets remain contagious for approximately 3 weeks after treatment is initiated. It is important for treatments to be performed properly!

## **RINGWORM MEDICATED BATH INSTRUCTIONS**

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For skin conditions to properly respond to therapy, you must correctly bathe the pet!

1. Brush and Comb out all mats BEFORE the bath.
2. Lubricate the eyes with eye ointment to prevent eye irritation from the soap.
3. Wet thoroughly before applying soap. Use luke-warm water for the pet's comfort.
4. Apply a SMALL amount of the soap and Scrub in WELL with a soft brush or your fingers. Be sure to wear gloves! Add more WATER, not more soap to get more lather. Medicated shampoos are very concentrated and go a long way. A sponge can be used to wash the face. Using the fingers on the rest of the body is better than any brush for lathering and scrubbing the skin.
5. Allow the soap to stay on the pet's body for 5 - 10 minutes. This step is VERY important. Do NOT cheat!! Use a kitchen timer for the allotted time. It is very important the medication stay on the skin long enough to work!
6. After the allotted time, THOROUGHLY RINSE.
7. Repeat the soap procedure if the pet is extremely dirty.
8. If the pet gets wet after the dipping procedure, the bath and dip must be repeated again. It is important that the residue from the rinsing and dipping solutions remain on the skin between treatments.
9. Simply wetting the hair coat will NOT be effective. Correct application of the prescribed products is essential for success of the therapy. Your pet's recovery depends on you.
10. Call us for any additional information or advice you need.

Thanks for stopping by!

Kathy