

TINEA CAPITIS

What is tinea capitis?

Tinea capitis (also called “ringworm of the scalp”) is the most common fungus infection in children, and usually affects children from 2 to 10 years of age. Fewer than 5 percent of cases of ringworm of the scalp occur in adults. Most cases of ringworm involving the scalp are due to a fungus that is passed from person to person, although pets can also pass on the fungus.

The fungal infection can begin as dandruff, areas of baldness, or areas of redness on the scalp with swelling and pus bumps. In some cases, big bumps (lymph nodes) in the neck may be felt.



Scaly areas of hair loss

The diagnosis of fungus infection is suspected by the appearance of the scalp and can be verified by fungal cultures. The fungal culture usually grows the fungus in four weeks. The child with ringworm of the scalp is contagious and should not share hair, combs, towels or hats with other kids.



Dandruff-like dry scaling



Dandruff-like dry scaling

Treatment

Even though the scale is seen on the surface of the scalp, the infection goes deep to the root of the hair, under the skin.

Because of this, just using creams or shampoos will not clear the infection.

1. Terbinafine (pill for scalp fungus)

A pill needs to be taken once a day for about 4 weeks to clear the fungus infection. Based on your child's weight, it will be either 1/2, 3/4 or a full pill. Even if the scalp looks better, you need to take the medicine until finished. Unfortunately, there is no liquid version of terbinafine in Canada.

2. Medicated shampoos

Even though a medicated solution will not cure tinea capitis, it can help reduce the chance of passing on the fungus.

Instructions for shampoo: Wet hair and scalp. Apply approximately 1 capful of selenium sulfide shampoo (e.g. Selsun Blue, Head & Shoulders-selenium) and lather into the hair and scalp. Leave on for approximately 10 minutes and rinse off. Other shampoos or conditioners may be used after rinsing out the shampoo. Shampooing should be done two to three times a week.