

Date:
Foster Parent:
Animal #:
Phone:

DERMATOPHYTOSIS (RINGWORM) INTRODUCTION by Dr. Spindel

Your foster kitten (s) have been positively diagnosed with dermatophytosis, a fungal infection of the keratinized tissue of the hair, nail or skin. Often referred to as “ringworm”, dermatophytosis is usually caused by one of three species of dermatophytes; *Microsporum*, *Trichophyton*, and *Epidermophyton*. Other fungi are uncommon.

Feline dermatophytosis can occur in many different clinical forms, from the classic circular scaling lesion with hair loss, to a cat with subclinical infection where no outward clinical signs are apparent. These cats serve as a reservoir in the spread of dermatophytosis. Some cats will have just a dandruff-like pattern with or without associated itching.

Fungal culture is the most reliable and definitive way of diagnosing infected animals, and this is how the Humane Society of Washington County confirms suspected cases of dermatophytosis. Hair specimens will be collected from suspect animals and grown in a specialized media for 7-10 days. Dermatophytes will create a red color change as a fungal colony grows on the media. An ultraviolet light called a Wood’s Lamp may also be used as a screening tool. Approximately 50% of *Microsporum* infected hairs will fluoresce an apple green color. Fluorescence can be difficult to interpret, and a fungal culture will usually be done to confirm infection.

Dermatophytosis is a zoonotic disease, which means it can be transferred from animals to humans. It is contagious to children and immunocompromised individuals in particular, but can also be contracted by healthy adults. Because of the potential for spread, HSWC does not typically foster animals known to have ringworm, nor do we treat these animals in our shelter. Animals with ringworm are generally euthanized in order to prevent spread of this contagious disease through the general shelter population.

Your foster animal(s) were diagnosed after entering foster, and we understand the bond you have already formed. You are being given the option to treat in your home, after reading and signing that you understand the following protocol. The treatment for ringworm can be lengthy (generally 2-3 months minimum), expensive, and emotionally challenging for foster homes. We will be here to support your decision to treat or to euthanize your foster animal(s).

TREATMENT EXPLANATION:

The Humane Society will perform an initial diagnostic fungal culture

The Humane Society will provide oral antifungal medication for 3 weeks of treatment. It is the foster parent's responsibility to administer medications as directed.

Lyme Sulfur dips will need to be done on each kitten twice weekly while on medication and continuing until culture is negative.

A fungal culture may be done after week 3 of treatment

If a negative culture is obtained, kittens can proceed with spaying/neutering.

Kittens who successfully clear ringworm will ideally be adopted out of foster home, without a return to the stress of the shelter environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING:

It is the foster parent's responsibility to comply with these recommendations. Treatment requires a great deal of effort. Failing to adequately disinfect can lead to reinfection and treatment failure.

Daily cleaning will minimize the amount of environmental contamination present. A thorough cleaning will be required when the infected animal(s) leave.

Ringworm infected animals must be kept in a small, easy to clean area separated from other animals in the home. They should be handled minimally with protective clothing.

Daily cleaning:

- 1) Vacuum daily to remove any infected hairs from the environment (floor, counter, carrier, windowsill etc)
- 2) Clean with dilute bleach any non-porous surface 1:32 dilution (1/2 cup bleach in 1 gallon water)
- 3) Change and discard any soiled bedding

After animals leave the home:

- 1) Discard animals' bedding and toys
- 2) 1:32 bleach used on any non-porous surface and repeat in 1 week
- 3) Vacuum daily for 1 week, including heater/cooler vents and discard vacuum cleaner bags
- 4) Commercially clean carpets (home carpet cleaners won't reach high enough temperatures to be effective)

- 5) Discard contact clothing or wash with bleach/hot water if colorfast. If not colorfast, can do 2 washes in plain cold water with plenty of water (ie not too crowded) for good agitation. Dry in hot dryer between washes.
- 6) Infected spores can last in environment for 2 years – advise no high risk foster for 1-6 months
- 7) Test any exposed animals in home (ie if own pets interacted with fosters)

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this information

Foster Parent

Foster Care Coordinator

I do not wish to pursue treatment with my foster animals at this time

Foster Parent

Foster Care Coordinator

I agree to the above treatment and cleaning protocols and further understand that the Humane Society cannot be held responsible if the fungal infection is spread to any human or animal in contact with the foster animal during its foster period.

Foster Parent

Foster Care Coordinator