

RINGWORM: ITS CAUSE AND TREATMENT.

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Ringworm is a popular name given to various affections of the skin. It is due to a parasitic fungus which spreads in the form of a ring, with healthy skin inside it.

It was first discovered by Malmsten in 1844.

The fungus seen microscopically consists of a network arranged in chains with oval and fairly large spores.

There are two classes of this type of parasite, the microsporion and the trichophyton, of which there are many varieties. The microsporion audouini, to give it its full name, is usually found deep in the interior of the hair roots, in the scalp, and the trichophyton in the hair itself.

Ringworm of the scalp (*tinea tonsurans*) is highly infectious and sometimes epidemics occur in schools, spreading from child to child. In some cases the child may only have the hair infected just here and there, and it is in these cases, which escape notice, that infection can be spread.

Animals, such as cats and dogs, and cattle, sometimes suffer from ringworm and also help to spread the disease.

On animals it appears as circular bald patches, often scurvy in appearance and commencing at the head, neck and tail. It can be carried by them to humans and they are a chief source of infection.

Ringworm may be seen on the scalp in children between the ages of six and twelve. It develops by circular patches spreading over the scalp from the size of a threepenny piece to half-a-crown—or even larger. The affected part of the scalp becomes puffy and elevated, and covered with red and yellowish scaly patches. The hair attacked by the fungi in these patches becomes lustreless, dry, twisted and brittle; having lost its elasticity it breaks off close to the scalp. It is these hairs and scales which spread contagion.

Treatment may consist of either an antiseptic ointment such as iodine, creosote, or other germicides to destroy the fungus, such as sodium theosulphate or corrosive sublimate are sometimes used after the skin has been scrubbed with soap or soft soap and the hair cut short, so that the site of infection is visible. All infected clothes and hair brushes should be destroyed by burning.

X-ray treatment may be given to destroy the infected hairs, and this method is usually successful. Chloroform dabbed on to the affected hair will help in detecting the presence of the parasite; it will become whitened and have a frosted appearance if present.

Ringworm of the body (*tinea circinata*) is marked by the occurrence of red, scaly, itchy, and reddish circular spots, growing paler in the centre and increasing in size. These areas are often covered with vesicles causing itching, especially when it occurs on the inner side of the thighs, axillæ and feet. It may affect the face, neck, and back, and the size of the ring may be as large as 4 in. in diameter. It is easier to cure than ringworm of the head and terminates sometimes quite spontaneously.

Treatment consists in killing the parasite by painting the areas affected with iodine. Another effective antiseptic is mersagel, consisting of phenyl mercuric acetate, which is applied night and morning. It is lightly applied and the parts exposed for a short while to dry, but where

the infection has penetrated deep into the skin cases take longer to clear up. Usually, severe cases yield within 10 days.

In ringworm of the beard, causing inflammation of the hair follicles, a disease known as sycosis, reddish rings appear covered with scales, vesicles or pustules and the hair becomes affected, loosens and breaks off.

Ringworm may also affect the nails, causing them to become darkened and no longer transparent, and brittle, liable to crumble easily.

Favus, caused by the fungus *achorion schonleinii*, is another form of ringworm, and is known by the presence of yellow cup-shaped crusts or scutula, which, also, is highly infectious and can be seen by the naked eye. It is a cutaneous disease, and more commonly affects the scalp. It forms honey-combed masses which are produced with great rapidity. It is carried by the mouse and from the mouse to the cat, and these are the chief source of infection apart from lack of cleanliness. The hair becomes lustreless and stiff, baldness in severe cases may be permanent; the hair does not break off as in ringworm of the scalp. The treatment consists of general tonics such as cod liver oil and iron; X-rays combined with ointments containing a germicide may be used after the crusts have been removed.

Patches on the body are easily removed and cured by: 10 per cent. chrysarobin, which is often used in these cases.

Vagabond's disease (*tinea versicolor*).—This is marked by scaly, fawn-coloured patches of varying shapes, which may be mistaken for the bronzing of Addison's disease; it usually occurs on the body, but may extend to the face. This is sometimes seen in long-standing cases of *pediculus corporis*.

Treatment consists of the parts affected being thoroughly scrubbed with soap and the area anointed with some strong antiseptic lotion.

HELPING THE DEAF TO HEAR.**SUPPLY OF BATTERIES.**

The Board of Trade announces that arrangements have been completed for the manufacture of an adequate supply of high tension batteries for deaf persons who use aids to hearing. Owing to Service requirements it has, however, been found necessary to curtail considerably the number of different types of these batteries, and manufacture will be restricted to an agreed range of standard types.

The new types have been designed to cover the requirements of all existing United Kingdom makes of aids which employ high tension batteries, but some instruments may need minor modifications in order to accommodate them. In general the new batteries are rather larger than those formerly in use, but every endeavour has been made to ensure that alterations to instruments where necessary shall be of a minor character and confined to the battery casing. No modifications will be required in the mechanism of any instrument. Manufacturers of aids to hearing will inform users of the most appropriate new types of battery and any necessary modifications to their sets.

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