

Ringworm Guide for Fosters

Thank you for fostering a cat with ringworm! Fosters for these cats are essential to maintaining Austin's No-Kill status! Treatment of a ringworm cat is typically 3 weeks to 3 months, however treatment may take longer in certain situations. Fostering this cat is very likely going to decrease the length of treatment time, as cats recover faster in the kind of loving, low-stress environment that only a home can provide. Treatment may involve a daily oral medication and a twice a week lime sulfur dipping to help kill and control the spores. At the end of treatment you will have a wonderful ringworm-free kitty!

Ringworm Frequently Asked Questions

What is ringworm (dermatophytosis)?

Ringworm is the common name for the skin infection caused by a group of fungi; it is not caused by a worm at all. Most often it will cause a circular area of fur loss that is red and may be slightly raised. Ringworm can also have other characteristics but these circular, hairless lesions are most common. Ringworm is similar to athlete's foot in people. It is contagious to people; the young, old, and immunocompromised are more likely to get it. Ringworm is also very contagious to other animals.

Am I going to get ringworm from my foster kitty?

It is possible for you and anybody in your living space to get ringworm from your foster cat. Washing your hands after handling the cat can help reduce the chances of transmission, but some people may be at greater risk than others. This puts young animals and children, elderly people and pets, those who are HIV+, people on chemotherapy or taking medication after transfusion or organ transplant, and highly stressed people and animals at high risk.

What if I get ringworm?

We recommend that you see a physician.

What about my other animals?

In order to keep your other pets from getting ringworm we recommend that you keep your foster cat isolated in a room that is easy to clean, such as a bathroom. Washing your hands and changing your clothes in between interacting with your ringworm kitty and other animals can reduce the chance of spreading the fungus as well. Remember, your shoes can also be a carrier of the spores.

What treatment will my foster cat need?

Your cat may be prescribed a once daily oral medication (if they are at least 8 weeks old, weigh at least two pounds, and are otherwise healthy) in conjunction with lime sulfur dipping. Instructions for dipping are included in this packet, and we are always available for advice and support. Additionally, cats can be brought to the ringworm ward at Town Lake (1156 W Cesar Chavez on Tuesday and Friday between 12 and 6 to receive a lime dip if you don't want to dip at home! This process typically takes 15-30 minutes. All kittens that come to the ringworm ward for dips must be at least 6 weeks old! For young kittens 6-9 weeks old we ask that you bring a heat source to keep them warm while they dry. If your foster kitten has littermates that are not showing signs of ringworm yet, we recommend lime dipping them as a possible preventative measure. Cats that are exposed and not showing symptoms will not receive oral medication.

What about my home?

If you keep your cat in a bathroom or other confined, tiled area it is very easy to clean the space. Ringworm is killed using a bleach dilution of 10 parts water to 1 part bleach. Let the solution sit for approximately 15 minutes for maximum efficacy. The area the cat is kept in, and all of its bedding, should be washed using bleach at least once weekly.

Remember! By fostering this cat you are truly saving a life! While cats and dogs with ringworm are routinely euthanized at shelters around the country, Austin Pets Alive! believes that these animals deserve to be alive just as much as an animal without ringworm. It is a very treatable and temporary issue that, with a little TLC, will leave you feeling thankful you made the right decision!

Lime Sulfur Dip Instructions:

Supplies needed:

- Lime Sulfur Dip
- Measuring cup
- Rubber gloves
- Plastic container sized to fit the body of your cat [litter box with high sides]
- Wash cloth to apply dip over cat
- Large cotton balls
- Disinfected carrier

Things to know before dipping:

- Wait to lime dip your cat 14 days after being spayed and 7 days after being neutered
- Lime dip will change the color of metal, so remove jewelry before dipping
- Lime dip has a "rotten egg"-like odor
- Keep towels used for dipping separate from regular laundry because it will transfer smell
- Wear old clothes to dip as the dip can stain them yellow
- Dip will cause the fur of cats to yellow but this will fade quickly
- Lime dipping is much easier with two people!

Lyme dip Procedure:

Have a carrier ready with a small towel in the bottom to place the cat in after dipping so that they may *drip dry*. This also helps reduce the smell and the potential of staining. Find a warm, well-ventilated room to dip in. Put on rubber gloves to protect your hands. Pour ½ of a cup of lime sulfur dip and 1 gallon of warm water into the plastic dipping tub (if you are dipping small kittens or only have one kitten to dip you may be directed to use ¼ cup of lime sulfur dip and ½ gallon of warm water). Scruff cat and lower them into the warm lime sulfur dip solution. Pour solution over cat, making sure to get them completely wet down to the skin; this might require you to rub the solution onto the cat. Squeeze feet gently to extract claws and dip feet [ringworm can hide in cat's nail beds]. Use a cotton ball or toothbrush to get the face wet, paying extra attention to the ears, nose, whiskers, and chin. The solution burns delicate mucus membranes so be as careful as possible on the facial area, especially around nose and eyes. If you happen to get dip in the cat's eye, be sure to flush the eye well with fresh water. Kittens may require a heat source to keep them warm while drying! Repeat these steps once or twice a week.

Once your cat is clear of ringworm, it is recommended to dip once more to kill any spores and give the room a final cleaning with the 10:1 bleach solution.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to schedule a recheck for your ringworm fosters please email ringworm-manager@austinpetsalive.org! Thank you!