



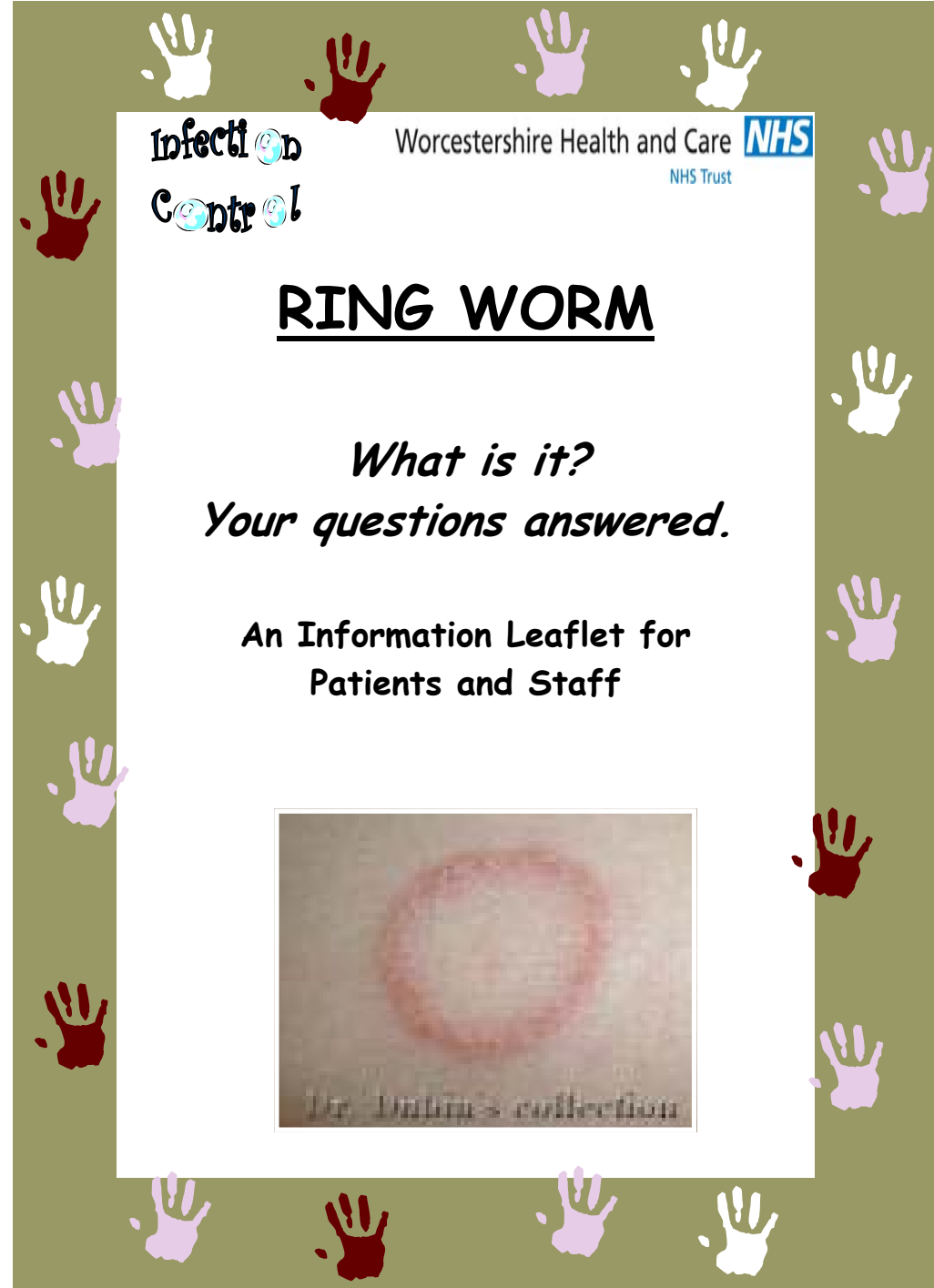
This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please contact the Infection Control Nurses, Worcestershire non acute NHS Infection Control Service, Evesham Community Hospital, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1JT

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Infection Control  
Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust

# RING WORM

*What is it?  
Your questions answered.*

An Information Leaflet for  
Patients and Staff



Dr. Datta's collection

## RINGWORM

### *What is it?*

Ringworm is an infection of the skin caused by a fungus.

### *How do you know if someone has it?*

It typically appears as flat, spreading, ring shaped patches. The edges are usually reddish and may be dry and crusted or moist and crusted. As each ring spreads, the middle clears leaving more normal looking skin. On the scalp, it can cause patches of baldness.

### *How is it spread?*

From direct or indirect contact with infected people or animals. The fungus can survive on furniture, clothes, hairbrushes etc, so it is not always necessary to have close contact with an infected person.

### *What is the incubation period?*

The time from contact with the infection until the first sign of illness is usually 4-10 days.

### *Is there any treatment?*

Yes. There are several creams which are very effective against ringworm of the skin. A GP can prescribe these. It is important to continue treatment until the skin is completely clear.

For scalp ringworm a course of tablets or medicine is usually needed. These may have to be taken for several months. Using a cream at the same time may help to stop the infection spreading to other people. Once treated the hair will grow back normally.

### *Is it infectious?*

If left untreated some ringworm infections may be passed on to other people. Skin ringworm stops being infectious soon after treatment is started.

No-one knows for how long scalp ringworm is infectious, but if cream is used as well as tablets, spread to other people is extremely unlikely.

### *What should you do if someone has ringworm?*

Consult your GP who will confirm the diagnosis and decide about treatment.

The area should be washed carefully with soap and water then dried before treatment is applied. Do not share the patient's clothes, towels and sheets as long as the ringworm is present. Wash them on a hot wash (60°C).

Household contacts and pets should be checked for signs of infection and treated too, if infected.

### *How soon can someone with the infection return to work/ the care setting?*

Normally, individuals with ringworm on exposed areas (eg the scalp) should have been on treatment for at least one week before return to work/the care setting. However if the infected area is on the body and is covered up by clothing they can return as soon as treatment has been started.