



Adopting a Ringworm Cat

Congratulations on the adoption of your new furry companion! The adoption of a cat that has been diagnosed with ringworm can be a very rewarding experience. Treatment of a ringworm cat is normally 3 weeks to 3 months. However, cats tend to recover faster in the kind of loving, low-stress environment that only a home can provide! Treatment involves a daily oral medication and a twice a week lime dipping to help kill and control the spores. Though it may seem like a lot of hard work up front, it's a short-term commitment compared to the lifetime of love ahead of you and your new 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 furloss that is red and may be slightly raised. Ringworm can also have other characteristics but these circular, hairless lesions are the most common symptom. Ringworm is closely related to athlete's foot in people, and it is contagious to us; the young, old, and immunocompromised are more likely to get it. Ringworm is also very contagious to other animals including dogs, other cats, guinea pigs, etc.

Am I going to get ringworm from my new kitty? It is possible for you and anybody in your living space to get ringworm from your new cat. Washing your hands after handling the cat and keeping them isolated to a bathroom for the length of their treatment 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 a 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. While ringworm is a curable, self-limiting ailment in healthy adults, we always recommend getting professional advice to resolve it in a timely manner.

What about my other animals? In order to keep your other pets from getting ringworm we recommend that you keep your adopted cat isolated in a room that is easy to clean, such as a bathroom. Washing your hands and changing your clothes in between 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 new cat need? Your cat will continue to take a once daily oral medication in conjunction with lime sulfur dipping. Instructions for dipping are included in this packet, and we are always available for advice and support. We will supply you with everything you will need to continue treatment for three weeks!

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 10 minutes for maximum efficacy. The area the cat is kept in, and all of their bedding, should be washed using bleach at least once weekly.

Remember! By adopting this cat you are truly saving a life! While cats and dogs with ringworm are euthanized every day at shelters around the country, Austin Pets Alive! believes that these animals deserve a second chance at finding a happy forever home. It is a very treatable and temporary issue that, with a little TLC, will leave you feeling thankful you put in the extra effort to give a crusty kitty a chance at a family!

Lime 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 stings in eyes, noses, and open wounds, so be careful around these
- Lime dip will change the color of metal, so remove jewelry before dipping and avoid stainless steel sinks
- Lime dip is a sulfur compound, and 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 turn yellow, but this will fade quickly
- Lime dipping is much easier with two people!

Procedure:

Find a warm, well-ventilated room to dip in. Put on rubber gloves, and pour ½ of a cup of lime dip and 1 gallon of warm water into the plastic dipping tub. Scruff the cat and lower them into the warm lime 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 or brush the wash cloth against the grain of their fur. Squeeze their feet gently to extract claws and dip feet. Use a cotton ball or toothbrush to get the face wet, paying extra attention to the ears, nose, whiskers, and chin. If you happen to get dip in the cat’s eye, be sure to flush the eye well with fresh water.

While the kitty drips dry in their carrier, clean up the room, wash their towels and bedding, and spray hard surfaces with a solution of 1 part bleach in 10 parts water. Let this sit for at least ten minutes, then dry the room and set it back up.

Repeat these steps once or twice a week.

Once your cat is clear of ringworm, it is recommended to dip them once more to kill any spores and give the room a final cleaning with the 10:1 bleach solution. After this, your cat is free to roam your home and be in contact with your other pets and people.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email ringworm@austinpetsalive.org!