



Fostering a Ringworm Cat

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 normally 3 weeks to 3 months, but as with any medical condition complications may cause treatment to last longer. 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 feel like a lot of hard work, ringworm is totally curable, non-lethal, and not nearly as scary as it seems at first. Since these cats are routinely euthanized in other shelters, your choice to foster them saves lives!

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 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 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, and while effective over-the-counter treatments are available, 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 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 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.

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 baths once or twice weekly. 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 Adoption Center at Town Lake (1156 W Cesar Chavez) on Tuesday and Friday between 12pm and 6pm to receive a lime dip if you don't want to do it at home! This process typically takes 10-20 minutes. All kittens that come to the Ringworm Adoption Center for dips must be at least six weeks old, and must have received at least 2 FVRCP vaccines. 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 do I tell potential adopters? APA! will provide adopters a complete information packet on ringworm as well as a full course of oral treatment and a container of lime sulfur dip (Note that APA! does not cover the cost of having the adopted kitten/cat with ringworm treated at another vet). Meet-and-greet sessions may be held at your home or in the Ringworm Adoption Center. Please inform interested adopters of your kitten(s) current ringworm status, and please forward any questions that potential adopters may have about ringworm treatment to the Ringworm Manager.

Can my kitty still go on the cattery waitlist? Yes! Though your foster cats cannot live in the cattery while they have ringworm, you can sign them up for the waitlist. When they are cleared of ringworm, you will automatically be inserted into the waitlist according to the date when you originally signed up.

Can my kitty still be spayed or neutered? Yes! However, they cannot be cleared of ringworm during surgery or for two weeks after their surgery due to the risk of them having a relapse at the surgical site. As a result, it pays to sign them up early in their ringworm treatment, so that you don't have to go back to square one when they're close to being cleared. Or you can have them checked at least one week before their surgery to see if they are clear ahead of time!

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 proud you saved a very worthy little life!

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

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 14 days after being spayed and 7 days after being neutered for full baths- just spot treat while you wait
- 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.

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