

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## UT SOUTHWESTERN SELECTED TO STUDY A TREATMENT FOR RINGWORM

DALLAS – October 11, 1999 – UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas is one of 14 U.S. institutions selected to study a pill to treat ringworm of the scalp.

Ringworm of the scalp is not a “worm” as the name implies, but an infection caused by a mold-like fungus called dermatophyte. Symptoms begin with small scaly bumps on the head that grow in size and spread out in circular patterns. Once the follicle is affected, the hairs at the site may become brittle and break off, leaving hairless, scaly patches.

“Medicated creams and shampoos are not very successful in eliminating ringworm because they don’t penetrate deep in the hair follicle where the fungus lives,” said Dr. Amit Pandya, associate professor of dermatology at UT Southwestern.

The purpose of the study is to determine whether terbinafine hydrochloride (Lamisil) tablets, currently prescribed to treat nail fungus, can effectively treat ringworm within a month. Topical medications usually take up to 12 weeks of treatment to eradicate the infection.

“Children are more susceptible to this type of infection because they play closely with other kids who have the fungus and may catch it from them in school and other crowded situations such as day-care facilities,” Pandya said. It can be contracted either by skin-to-skin contact or from sharing personal items, like hairbrushes, barrettes and hats.

African-American and Hispanic children are particularly susceptible to ringworm because coarse hair texture has a tendency to crack, allowing the fungus to penetrate deep in the hair shaft.

To qualify for the study, candidates must be over 4 years old, able to swallow pills and must not have been treated with oral medication for ringworm within the last six months.

Participants will receive medical care, medication and up to \$200 upon completion of the study. For more information, please call Leigh Donahue at 214-648-7563.

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