RINGWORM OF SCALP (Outbreaks only)
(Tinea capitis)

1. **Agent**: Various species of *Trichophyton* and *Microsporum*; e.g., *Trichophyton tonsurans*, *Microsporum audouinii*, *M. canis*. *Trichophyton tonsurans* is responsible for 90% of the cases in the USA.

2. **Identification**:
   a. **Symptoms**: May begin as small papules that spread peripherally, leaving scaly patches of baldness; or as numerous discrete pustules; or as discrete areas of hair loss studded by stubs of broken hairs. Occasionally boggy, raised and suppurative lesions (kerions) develop. **Favus** (infection by *T. schoenleinii*) is characterized by mousy odor and yellowish, cup-like crusts.
   b. **Differential Diagnosis**: Other dermatoses.
   c. **Diagnosis**: Microscopic examination of hairs and skin scales in 10% potassium hydroxide, Wood's (ultraviolet) light, or culture. Lesions caused by *M. canis* and *M. audouinii* fluoresce yellow-green under Wood's light. *Trichophyton* species do not fluoresce. Culture is necessary for organism identification.

3. **Incubation**: Unknown, thought to be 1-3 weeks. Usually 10-14 days.

4. **Reservoir**: Humans (principally) for *T. tonsurans*, *M. audouinii*, and *T. schoenleinii*; animals, primarily dogs, cats, and cattle, harbor other species.

5. **Source**: Fomites contaminated with infected hair and skin scales.

6. **Transmission**: Direct skin-to-skin or indirect contact from fomites.

7. **Communicability**: As long as active lesions or viable spores on contaminated fomites are present.

8. **Specific Treatment**: Terbinafine by mouth for 6 weeks. Selenium sulfide shampoos (1% or 2.5%) decrease fungal shedding and may help reduce transmission. In resistant cases with kerion formation, the combination of oral prednisone and griseofulvin may be helpful.

9. **Immunity**: Reinfections are rare.

**REPORTING PROCEDURES**

1. Reportable (outbreaks only). *(California Code of Regulations, Section 2500.)*

2. **Report Form**: OUTBREAK/UNUSUAL DISEASE REPORT FORM (CDPH 8554)

3. **Epidemiologic Data**:
   a. Site of infection.
   b. Exposure to known infected humans or animals, such as a dog, cat, or farm animal.
   c. Shared hair-care items or fomite, e.g., hair clippers, combs, brushes, hats, pillowcases, etc.

**CONTROL OF CASE & CONTACTS**

Investigate outbreaks only. Initiate evaluation within 24 hours.

**CASE**:

**Isolation**: None.

**CONTACTS**:

No restrictions.

Encourage examination of household, other close contacts, and pets for evidence of infection. Treat if infected.

**PREVENTION-EDUCATION**

1. Stress personal cleanliness; encourage individual combs, brushes and other personal items. Include proper sterilization of barbering equipment.
2. Advise households with pets that transmission can occur between animals and humans.

3. Advise child-care providers that children’s cots and mats should be arranged such that the children are placed head to toe.

**DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES**

**Container:** Mycology.

**Laboratory Form:** Test Requisition and Report Form H-3021

**Examination Requested:** Dermatophyte.

**Material:** Hair and/or scalp scrapings.

**Amount:** Several hairs from involved area.

**Storage:** Room temperature.

**Remarks:** Place material into provided 50 ml plastic tube.