Granuloma Annulare

Granuloma annulare (gran u LOW muh an u LAHR ee) is a raised, bumpy ring-like rash. This starts as a smooth bump on the skin and becomes a circular ring. The ring is clear in the center and has a smooth, raised border. This rash is not itchy or painful. It usually occurs alone but can appear in groups. It often appears on the arms and legs.

Granuloma annulare is often mistaken for ringworm. Ringworm, however, is usually scaly and itchy. Granuloma annulare is not. This rash can also be mistaken for bug bites or a rash caused by a tick with Lyme disease.

Granuloma annulare is common, but no one knows what causes it. It is not infectious or contagious (your child did not get the rash from someone else and cannot give it to anyone).

Diagnosis and Treatment

The diagnosis is usually made by your child’s doctor during an examination. Occasionally, a biopsy may be done. This means a small sample of your child’s rash will be taken to look at under a microscope. Some lab tests may also be ordered by your child’s doctor if more than one area of granuloma annulare is present.

Because granuloma annulare does not cause other problems, medicines are not needed. It is a safe option to watch these areas. The bumps often disappear on their own within a few months but may take years to go away completely.

Occasionally, creams containing steroids or injections (shots) are given if any itching occurs, (this is rare) or as a trial treatment. The side effects of these medicines should first be discussed with your child’s doctor. Treatment is usually not necessary.

When to Call the Doctor

- If the area becomes red, scaly, itchy or painful.
- If new areas of a similar rash appear in other places on the body.