

Pinworms

What are Pinworms?

Pinworms are tiny, white thread-like worms that live in the intestines. They are most common in children but can also affect adults. They are easily spread among children and staff of child care facilities. Pinworms are a nuisance, not a disease.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Pinworms?

Symptoms are caused by the female worms crawling out of the anus at night to lay their eggs on nearby skin. This causes irritation, itching, restlessness and loss of sleep; however some may experience no symptoms. Pinworms can be treated with medication.

How Do Pinworms Spread?

Pinworms are spread through fecal-oral route transmission. This occurs when an infected person scratches the itchy area and gets pinworm eggs on the fingers or under the fingernails and then touches other people or items. An uninfected person picks up pinworm eggs from their fingers, nails, clothes, beddings or contaminated surfaces. These eggs can survive for weeks outside the body. Re-infection of the same person can also occur.

What You Can Do?

- Watch your child for signs of pinworm infection, especially scratching the anus if another child has pinworms.
- All household members should wash their hands carefully (e.g. for at least 15 seconds with soap and water) after going to the toilet or changing diapers and before preparing or eating food.
- If your child has a pinworm infection:
 - He/she may need treatment prescribed by a doctor. Discuss with your doctor if all members of your household should be treated.
 - Monitor and increase handwashing (e.g. for at least 15 seconds with soap and water)
 - Inform child care staff.
 - For several days after treatment, change bed linen and underwear daily. Be careful not to shake eggs into the air. Clean/vacuum sleeping and living areas. Wash pajamas, underwear and sheets on hot water cycle.
 - Children are not excluded from school/day care.

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns.

**For further information contact the Infectious Disease Program at 625-8318
or toll free 1-888-294-6630, ext. 8318.**

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