



PINWORMS **(Enterobius vermicularis)**

What are pinworms?

Pinworms are small white worms that are about ½” long and as thin as a thread. These worms live in the large intestine of humans. The adult female worm crawls out of the rectal/anal opening at night and lays her eggs on the skin area around it. These eggs cause the child to itch and scratch. It is most common in preschool and school-aged children and their family members.

What are the symptoms?

Grinding of the teeth at night, upset stomach, loss of appetite, weight loss and bed-wetting have been associated with a pinworm infection. A classic symptom is itching around the rectum that may be worse at night. Sleep may be disturbed and result in restlessness and increased irritability. Many infected children and adults have no symptoms.

How are pinworms transmitted?

Pinworms are spread by ingesting (swallowing) the eggs from contaminated surfaces or fingers. They are capable of causing an infection within a few hours after being deposited on the skin and can survive up to 2 weeks on clothing, bedding, or other objects.

What are the signs of pinworms?

If you suspect your child may have pinworms, try the "scotch tape test" with a flashlight or a piece of piece of transparent applied to the rectal area. During the night, the adult worms or eggs may be seen directly around the rectal area or glued to the tape. It may be best to check your child early in the morning before he/she bathes or has a bowel movement. If you find any evidence of pinworms, contact your child’s physician for treatment. *Children may return to day care after the first treatment dose, after bathing, and after trimming and scrubbing nails.*

How long can a person pass the infection to others? What is the treatment?

The infection can be spread to others as long as the worms are present. There is specific medication, usually given as a single dose and repeated in 2 weeks. If several family members are involved, treatment of the whole family may be advised.

How can pinworms be prevented?

Be a good role model and teacher to others regarding good hand washing and personal hygiene! Helpful tips to remember are:

- Wash hands before eating or preparing food.
- Wash hands after toilet use or changing diapers.
- Bathe daily in the morning, shower if possible.
- Change underclothing daily. Wash underwear, night clothes and sheets after each treatment. Eggs are sensitive to sunlight; open bedroom blinds or curtains during the day.
- Keep nails short, discourage nail biting and scratching of the rectal area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
SCHD Communicable Disease Unit 330-375-2662
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com