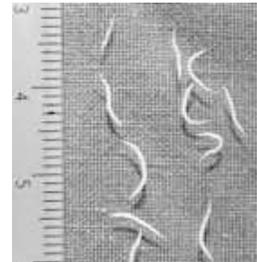


## **Pinworm (Threadworm, Seatworm)**

### **What is pinworm?**

Pinworm is an infection in the intestine caused by a parasite. It is very common in children. Adult worms look like tiny pieces of white dental floss. The worms live in the lower intestine. They travel, normally at night, to the skin around the anus. This is where the female lays her eggs. The eggs have a sticky covering that causes itching. Eggs get onto children's hands when they scratch. When children put their fingers into their mouth the eggs are swallowed and the infection continues.

The eggs can be passed from child to child when sharing such things as toys, bedding, clothing, or toilet seats. The eggs may also float in the air. They may then be breathed in and swallowed. Children do not get pinworms because their home, school or friends are dirty.



### **How will pinworm affect my child?**

Symptoms start about 2 to 4 weeks after infection. The skin around the anus and on the buttocks will itch, look red and may be sore. Most times, the itch is very slight, but restless sleep and waking up at night may occur. Girls may have vaginal soreness with itching and discharge. In some cases, pain when peeing may also occur.

### **How is pinworm treated?**

- Medicine can be used to treat pinworm. None of the medicines will destroy the pinworm eggs. To get rid of the worms that hatch from the eggs, a second treatment is needed 2 weeks after the first one.
- Your child's doctor may want to treat the whole family.
- Wash your child's clothes, bedding and towels in hot, soapy water on the first day after the medicine is taken.
- **Have your child wash their hands often with soap and water.** This especially important after using the bathroom.
- If the rectal itching is bad, have your child sit in a warm bath for 10 minutes or clean the area around the anus with witch hazel several times a day. A light coat of 0.5% hydrocortisone cream may also relieve itching.
- Your child can go back to school or day care after taking the first dose of medicine. It is ok for your child to have contact with other children.
- Pinworm affects only humans. Cats, dogs and other pets cannot spread pinworm.

## **Treatment (continued)**

- If you think your child has become re-infected, check after your child goes to sleep at night. Use a flashlight to look for worms around the anus. Your child's doctor can also check for eggs.
- If you think you may be infected, call your doctor.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**