

# Pinworm Seen

## Definition

- A tiny, harmless worm that lives in the colon (large bowel)
- It causes itching of the anus

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- Itching and irritation of the anus and buttocks is the main symptom
- Sometimes, moves to the vagina and causes vaginal itching or discharge

### Cause

- A white, very thin, threadlike worm. It's about ¼ to 1/2 inch (6 to 12 mm) long.
- It moves. (If it doesn't wiggle, it's probably lint or a thread.)
- The worm may be seen around the anus or on the child's bottom. It is especially active at night or early morning.
- Rarely, the pinworm is seen on the surface of a stool.

### Prevention

- Wash hands and fingernails well before meals and after using the toilet.

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Pinworms are the most common worm infection in the US.
- Pinworms can cause anal itching.
- Pinworms do not carry any diseases.
- Treatment is very helpful.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Pinworm Medicine:

- If a pinworm was seen, your doctor will suggest a special pinworm medicine.
- Give the medicine as directed.
- Give a repeat dose of the pinworm medicine in 2 weeks. Reason: To prevent the pinworms from coming back.
- The repeat dose is needed because eggs can live for 1 to 2 weeks. Temperature and humidity levels also affect how long the eggs can stay alive.

### 3. **Treating Family Members and Close Contacts:**

- Pinworms can spread to others within the same home. How often others get pinworms varies.
- Treat any child who sleeps with a child who has pinworms.
- Treat other family members only if they also have symptoms.
- Treat all family members if the same child gets pinworms a second time.
- Treat all family members if other family members develop symptoms.
- An adult with pinworms often means they got it from a child in the family. In this case, treat all family members.
- If any of your child's friends have symptoms, be sure to tell their parents. These children should get tested or checked for pinworms.

### 4. **Preventing Spread to Others:**

- Infection is caused by swallowing pinworm eggs.
- A child can get pinworms no matter how carefully you clean your home.
- The following hygiene measures, however, can help to reduce the chances of spread:
- Wash hands more often. Have your child scrub the hands and fingernails well before each meal. Also, wash the hands well after each use of the toilet. Keep the fingernails cut short, because eggs can collect here. Discourage nail biting.
- Each morning give your child a shower during the 2 weeks of treatment. Always rinse the anal area. Continue doing this for 3 days after taking the second dose of pinworm medicine.
- Have the infected child wear underwear at night during the 2 weeks of treatment. Remove it carefully just before showering. Caution: it may contain pinworm eggs.
- Bed sheets, towels and clothing can also be washed on a more frequent basis.
- Wash clothes, underwear and bedding at a hot temperature. This will kill any eggs left in them.
- Wash any toys child may be putting in mouth.

### 5. **What to Expect:**

- After taking the pinworm medicine, itching should stop in 5 in 7 days.

### 6. **Return to School:**

- Children with pinworms do not need to miss any child care or school.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Anal symptoms last over 1 week after treatment
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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