

CARING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH PINWORMS



Pinworms are tiny worms that cause a common intestinal infection. It's often found in children 5 to 14 years old.



Eggs and adult female worm

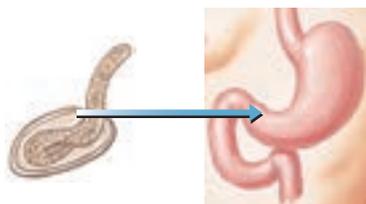
Female worm is bigger than male

Children get pinworms by eating or drinking contaminated food and beverages. Eggs get passed to others when children touch their anus and then touch something else.



Food and water can become contaminated with eggs.

Baby worms hatch from eggs and grow in intestines.



Itching around the anus or buttocks (especially at night) is the most common symptom. Scratching lets worms and eggs get on fingers and under nails.

Diagnosis can involve using a piece of transparent adhesive tape on the anus to get worms that are then looked at with a microscope.



What Are Pinworms?

Pinworms are tiny worms that cause a common intestinal infection. It's often found in children 5 to 14 years old. Crowded living conditions increase chances of spread to family members. It is usually more a nuisance than a major health problem.

People get the worms by eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated beverages. Eggs hatch and baby worms grow in the intestine. Female worms travel to the anal area to lay more eggs. Eggs get to other people by direct contact.

What Causes Pinworms?

Worms named *Enterobius vermicularis*, about the length of a staple, usually spread when children touch their hands and anus and then touch something else.

What Are the Symptoms of Pinworms?

Itching around the anus or buttocks (especially at night) is the most common symptom. Others include irritated skin around the anus, restlessness in infants, trouble sleeping, and itching in the area of the vagina.

How Are Pinworms Diagnosed?

The health care provider will take a medical history and do an examination. Because worms usually move around at night, the best time to check for worms is a couple of hours after children go to sleep and right after children wake in the morning. Parents can use a flashlight to better see the worms. A piece of transparent adhesive tape placed on the anus can get some worms that are then looked at with a microscope.



All family members must take an antiworm medicine. Creams or lotions may help with itching and skin irritation.



All eggs must be destroyed. To do this, cleaning everything—hands, fingernails, clothing, bedding, bathrooms, dishes, eating utensils—is important.



Follow up with your children's health care provider after treatment to make sure that all worms were killed.

How Are Pinworms Treated?

All family members will need to take an antiworm medicine. Creams or lotions may help with itching and irritation. Worms are killed in a couple of days, and itching should stop in 1 week.

All eggs must be destroyed. To do this, family members should wash hands and clean fingernails often. They should shower daily and wash the anal area carefully. Hands should be kept away from mouths. Hot water should be used to wash dishes, eating utensils, clothing, bedding, and towels. The house (especially toilet bowls, bathrooms, and bedrooms) and children's toys should be cleaned with a disinfectant.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Pinworms:

- ✓ **DO** tell your children's health care provider about other medical problems and medicines.
- ✓ **DO** call your children's health care provider if itching doesn't get better after 1 week.
- ✓ **DO** have your children take medicine as directed.
- ✓ **DO** teach children good hand-washing methods with soap after toileting and before eating.
- ✓ **DO** tell the school nurse or day care about the pinworms.
- ✓ **DO** keep your children's fingernails clean and short.
- ✓ **DO** bathe your children and change underwear and bed linens daily.
- ✓ **DO** use very hot water to wash dishes, scrub all washable toys with a bleach solution, and scrub toilets thoroughly.
- ✓ **DO** follow up with your children's health care provider after treatment to make sure all worms were killed.
- ✓ **DO** call your children's health care provider if anyone has symptoms again after treatment or side effects from medicines that don't go away quickly.
- ⊗ **DON'T** let your children scratch their anal area, suck their fingers, or bite their nails.
- ⊗ **DON'T** let other children play or sleep over until treatment is over.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- National Center for Preparedness, Detection, and Control of Infectious Diseases
Tel: (800) 311-3435
Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncpdcid/>
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Tel: (301) 496-5717, (866) 284-4107
Website: <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/>