



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

PINWORM

What is pinworm?

Pinworm is an infection caused by a small, white intestinal worm called *Enterobius vermicularis*. Pinworms are the length of a staple and live in the rectum of humans. While an infected person sleeps; female pinworms leave the intestines through the anus and deposit eggs on the surrounding skin.

How is pinworm spread?

Pinworm may be spread the following way(s):

- Pinworm eggs are infective within a few hours after being deposited on the skin. They can survive up to 2 weeks on clothing, bedding, or other objects. You or your children can become infected after accidentally swallowing infective pinworm eggs from contaminated surfaces or fingers.

What are possible symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Itching around the anus.
- Disturbed sleep.
- Irritability
- Severe infection may cause loss of appetite and restlessness.

How is pinworm diagnosed?

If pinworm is suspected, transparent adhesive tape or a pinworm paddle are applied to the anal region. The eggs become glued to the sticky tape or paddle and are identified by examination under a microscope. The test should be done as soon as you wake up in the morning. You

may have to provide several samples to your health care provider for examination.

What is the treatment for pinworm?

Pinworm is treated with either prescription or over-the-counter drugs. You should consult your health care provider before treating a suspected case of pinworm. Treatment involves a two-dose course. The second dose should be given 2 weeks after the first.

How can I prevent Pinworm?

- Bathe when you wake up.
- Change and wash your underwear each day.
- Change underwear, night clothes and sheets after each treatment.
- Because the eggs are sensitive to sunlight, open blinds or curtains in the bedrooms during the day.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet, before eating and after changing diapers.
- Trim fingernails short.
- Discourage nail-biting and scratching bare anal areas.

For more information on pinworm:

Ottawa County Health Department

www.miOttawa.org

National Institutes of Health

www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/roundwor.htm