

Facts about Pinworms

Pinworms are tiny, white worms that live in the large intestine. They look like pieces of white thread. They come out of the anus (bum) at night and lay their eggs on nearby skin. The worms may be seen with a flashlight as crawling threads around the bum after the child has been asleep for about an hour.

Pinworms are common among preschool and school-age children. Usually children with pinworms have no symptoms but may be very itchy around the bum and vagina.

Pinworms are not a disease but they can make a child uncomfortable.

How are Pinworms Spread?

Pinworms spread easily when:

- a person with pinworms scratches the itchy area and gets eggs on the fingers and under the fingernails. Then the infection can be spread by touching someone else.
- someone picks up pinworm eggs from an infected person's clothes, pajamas, sheets, etc. These eggs can live for many weeks outside the body.

A doctor can do a simple test to check for pinworms. Pinworms can be treated with medicine.

A child can get pinworms again by coming into contact with pinworm eggs. To stop the spread of pinworms, all caregivers and children may need to be treated.



What to Do at Home

- Watch your child for signs of pinworms if another child has them.
- Watch for scratching of the bum.
- **Talk to your doctor** about treatment if your child has pinworms.
- Make sure all household members wash their hands carefully after going to the toilet or changing diapers.
- Make sure they also wash their hands before preparing or eating food.
- Change underwear, nighties, pajamas and bed sheets often to get rid of any eggs.
- Bathe your child in the morning to remove any eggs that were laid around the bum during the night.
- Tell the caregivers at the centre if your child has pinworms.



Children with pinworms may go to the child care centre or school.