



Pinworm

What is it?

- Pinworms are tiny, white, thread-like worms that live in the rectum.

Signs and Symptoms?

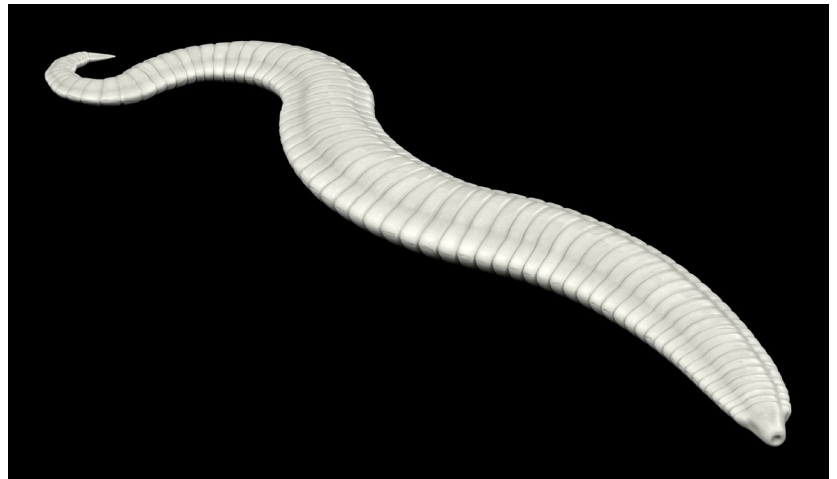
- The worms crawl out of the anus (bum) at night and lay their eggs on nearby skin.
- Pinworms can be uncomfortable but they do not cause disease.
- Some children get very itchy around the anus and vagina, especially at night. If the infection is bad, your child can lose sleep and become cranky.
- Pinworms are white, thin, wiggly worms that measure about one-quarter of an inch in length and cause itching, irritation and discomfort.
- If your child has pinworms, their doctor can prescribe special medication to treat the problem.

How does it spread?

- They are very common in children and spread easily among children in child care.
- Directly: An infected person who scratches the itchy area can get pinworm eggs on the fingers or under the fingernails. If that person touches another person's mouth, they will spread pinworms.
- Indirectly: Eggs can get from an infected person onto objects, such as toys, toilet seats or baths, clothes or bedding. By sharing these objects, other people can pick up the eggs on their hands and then put them into their mouth.
- Eggs can live for up to 2 weeks outside the body, on clothing, bedding or other objects.

How to decrease the spread?

- Pinworms can come back if your child comes into contact with pinworm eggs again. They can stay alive in your home for up to 2 to 3 weeks.



- Make sure everyone in your family washes their hands carefully after going to the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food.
- Wash your bed linens and clothes. Don't shake them because this can scatter the eggs.
- Keep everyone's fingernails short and avoid nail-biting.
- The eggs are sensitive to sunlight. Open blinds or curtains in bedrooms during the day when your child isn't sleeping.
- A child can develop a pinworm infestation if they swallow pinworm eggs. The worm usually develops about three to four weeks after the egg has been swallowed.

Recommended absence:

There is no recommended absence for pinworms.

Pinworms is not reportable to the Medical Officer of Health

Resources:

About Kids Health www.aboutkidshealth.ca
Caring for Kids www.caringforkids.cps.ca

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