

## PINWORM INFECTION

Pinworm infection is the most common intestinal worm infection in the United States. Pinworms are most often found in preschool and school-aged children, and their parents. These small worms are found in the human intestine and crawl out of the rectum at night to lay eggs on the anal area.

### CAUSE

*Enterobius vermicularis*, parasite

### SYMPTOMS

Itching of the anal area (especially at night), which can lead to difficulty sleeping, restlessness and irritability. Asymptomatic infection is possible.

### SPREAD

Pinworms are spread via the fecal-oral route when eggs from an infected person's anal area are ingested by another individual. This can occur when uninfected people touch the anal area of an infected person (e.g., during diaper changing) or handle contaminated pajamas, underwear, or bedding and then touch their mouth. Spread can also occur when infected people do not wash their hands well after scratching the anal area and then touch food or other objects, which are then eaten or touched by an uninfected person. Pinworms do not come from pets – humans are the only reservoir. Reinfection is possible if treatment and prevention methods are not followed.

### INCUBATION (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)

2 to 8 weeks

### CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

As long as eggs are present. Eggs can cause infection when they have been outside the body for as long as 2 to 3 weeks.

### EXCLUSION

Child care and School: None

### DIAGNOSIS

Pinworms can sometimes be seen near the anus or on clothing 2-3 hours after an infected individual falls asleep. Pinworm eggs can be collected using the "tape test." Follow [this link \(http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen\\_info/faqs.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen_info/faqs.html) for more details. Itching during the night in a child's perianal area strongly suggests pinworm infection. Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if they suspect pinworms.

### TREATMENT

Usually medication is given in a single dose at the time of diagnosis and then a second dose is given two weeks later.

### PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Good hand hygiene is the best way to prevent pinworm infection. Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet, after contact with the anal area, handling bedding or underclothing, and before eating or preparing food. Use a fingernail brush when washing hands.

- Discourage children from scratching or touching bare anal area, and from biting their nails.
- Keep fingernails short.
- Infected people should bathe in the morning, which removes some of the eggs.
- For several days after treatment, all bedding and underclothing should be handled carefully, should not be shaken, and should be laundered promptly.
- Co-bathing is not recommended during infection and treatment.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/> or [http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen\\_info/faqs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen_info/faqs.html)