

PINWORMS

Fact Sheet



What are Pinworms?

Pinworms are small, white, threadlike worms (1/4 inch - 1/2 inch long) that live in the large intestine.

What are signs and symptoms of pinworms?

Many people have no signs or symptoms, but there may be itching and irritation around the anal or vaginal area.

How is it spread?

Pinworms are spread by contact with feces (poop) of people who are infected. This usually involves an infected child contaminating his own fingers, then touching an object that another person touches. The person then puts their fingers in their own mouth or someone else's mouth and infects them. Sharing toys, bedding, clothing, toilet seats, or baths may spread pinworms. The eggs are light and can float in the air. One to two months after swallowing the pinworm egg, an adult worm will travel to the anal area. A person is contagious as long as the female worm is discharging eggs to the skin around the anus. The eggs remain infective on objects for 2 - 3 weeks in an indoor environment. The infection commonly clusters within families.

How do you control them?

Practice good hand-hygiene techniques at all times. Keep a child's fingernails short and clean. If your child is diagnosed with pinworms, report the infection to staff member at their child care program or school for action related to the care of ill children.

How do you keep it from spreading?

If your child has intense itching around the anal or vaginal area, suspect pinworms. See a health care professional for treatment recommendations. Bathe your child in the morning to remove a large proportion of eggs that are laid at night. Avoid shaking bedding or underwear to prevent further spreading of the eggs through the air. Wash hands immediately after using the toilet and before putting something in the mouth. Clean and sanitize surfaces used for eating, toileting, food preparation, and diapering. Wash toys frequently.

Pinworms in a group setting:

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Exclusion:

No, not once seen by a health professional and treated.