

FACT SHEET

PINWORMS

(Enterobius Vermicularis)

<i>What are Pinworms?</i>	Pinworms are a common parasitic worm that cause itching and irritation in the peri-anal (the area around the anus).
<i>How is it spread?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinworms are spread when infective eggs are swallowed, either directly by scratching themselves and transferring eggs from anus to mouth or indirectly by clothing, bedding, food or other articles contaminated with eggs. • Eggs are resistant to disinfectants and can stay alive in the environment for 13 days. • Adult worms die after laying eggs, so reinfection (either auto infection or reinfection from others) is necessary to maintain a pinworm infection.
<i>What is the incubation period?</i>	It takes about 2-6 weeks after contact for signs of infestation to appear.
<i>What are the early signs?</i>	Pinworm infection causes itching in the anal area; there may also be disturbed sleep, irritability, and local irritation due to scratching. In some cases, there are no apparent symptoms.
<i>What about contacts?</i>	Encourage extra care with handwashing, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. Exclude the child from school only if symptoms occur.
<i>How long is the person contagious?</i>	Pinworms can be transmitted as long as the female worm survives in the intestine (usually about two weeks). Children can easily reinfect themselves and it is not uncommon for other household members to become infected.
<i>When is it OK to return to school?</i>	A child may return to school after a physician for diagnosis sees him, and after the initial dose of treatment is given.
<i>Other Important Information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent's should keep children's nails short and discourage children scratching the anal area or nail biting. • If the infection is extensive, treatment may need to be repeated in two weeks. • Clean & vacuum house for several days after treatment of cases. Wash all bedding, linens, underclothing, and recently-worn clothes.

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5264 or 373-5267.

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